ICOM international council of museums Deutschland

Difficult Issues

Difficult Issues

Reihe: Beiträge zur Museologie, Band 7

Die Reihe versammelt analytische Aufsätze ebenso wie Praxisbeispiele und bietet somit vielfältige Perspektiven auf die Museumsarbeit. Sie richtet sich an erfahrene Museumswissenschaftler und -praktiker sowie an Berufseinsteiger, die ihre Kenntnisse in den musealen Kernaufgaben Sammeln, Bewahren, Ausstellen und Forschen erweitern möchten. Studenten der Museumskunde erhalten einen Einblick in die Berufspraxis. Die Schriftenreihe erscheint seit 2010 in unregelmäßigen Abständen, mit Band 7 erstmals als Online-Publikation. Die Bände 1 bis 6 werden sukzessive ebenfalls online zur Verfügung gestellt.

The series brings together analytical essays as well as practical examples and thus offers diverse perspectives on the work of museums. It is aimed at experienced museum scholars and -practitioners as well as at newcomers who want to broaden their knowledge of the museum's core tasks, collecting, preserving, exhibiting and researching. Students of museology will gain a valuable insight into professional practice. This series has been published at irregular intervals since 2010, with volume 7 the first to be published online. Volumes 1 to 6 will be made available online in the near future.

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ICOM Deutschland e.V. ist das deutsche Nationalkomitee des Internationalen Museumsrates ICOM. Mit seinen mehr als 6.000 Mitgliedern ist ICOM Deutschland die mitgliederstärkste Organisation von Museen und Museumsfachleuten in Deutschland und auch innerhalb von ICOM. Er vertritt im Dialog und Zusammenwirken mit anderen Kultur- und Museumsorganisationen die Interessen der Museen und der Museumsfachleute im öffentlichen Leben.

ICOM Germany e.V. is the German national committee of the International Council of Museums ICOM. With more than 6,000 members, ICOM Germany is the largest organisation of museums and museum experts in Germany as well as within ICOM. In dialogue and collaboration with other cultural and museum organisations, it represents the interests of museums and museum professionals in public life.

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Difficult Issues

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Editor's preface
Beate Reifenscheid, President ICOM Germany

They appear in the everyday life of museums every now and then, or are a system-imminent theme: Difficult Issues. Outwardly often not or only inadequately communicated, they sometimes represent a tear test for dealing with them. Inevitably they lead to issues, objects, and historical perspectives shifting, or at least undergo a new critical evaluation. Topics from the Nazi past, relics from colonial contexts, dealing with indigenous peoples, as well as collection areas, which today can have a completely different value than in the past, are critical cliffs that need new addressing, exploring, discussing and mediating. In external relationships, this may not be as tension-free as in internal relationships: in the public sector especially politicians are looking to create their own standards and ideas or even dictate them in the worst case. For their part, the public answers with its canon of values, which does not have to be congruent with that of the exhibiting museum.

ICOM Germany, together with the invited five national committees, has chosen this topic as a starting point, broad, varied and, beyond certain borders, to shed light on these complex facets of everyday museum life. For the first time in the history of ICOM, six national committees have come together, creating a pioneering model for not only designing conferences in a dual dialogue. In addition to the content-related challenges that the specially-prepared editorial board had to master, as well as the review and rating of the submitted papers, the organizational board also had to prepare the conference in Helsingborg. We would like to express our sincere thanks to both boards, who have done their job as well as friendly and efficient. We would also like to thank Suay Aksoy, our President of ICOM International, who accompanied Peter Keller, the Director General, during the three days in Helsingborg.

The present conference proceedings bring together numerous contributions of the international ICOM Conference *Difficult Issues*. Under this title, around 200 museum experts gathered from 21 to 23 October 2017 in Helsingborg, Sweden, to present and discuss different practices and concepts on the topic "Which stories are remembered in museums and why?" A first assessment: In order to secure their relevance for the public and thus their acceptance, museums must completely reposition themselves at the center of

society and face the challenges of the present in an increasingly globalizing world. For example, they should make social groups more visible in their heterogeneity, give voice to their sometimes divergent life stories and present them as equal parts of the common cultural heritage (Kathrin Pabst, Kristel Rattus et al.).

For ICOM Germany, as the publisher of these conference proceedings, 'difficult issues' means that museum experts deal with all conceivable problems and do not shy away from them. One focus is on the handling of artefacts and their contexts from the Nazi regime (Suzie Thomas et al.), the culture of remembrance of wars (Karen Logan), also the context of the Holocaust (Natalie Meurisch). Questions about gender issues in museums (Merete Ipsen) or the storage of sensitive collection objects that have been proven to originate from problematic contexts (Ostritsch et al.) are raised. Last but not least, the authors demonstrate the continuity of museums, their further development in the 21st century (Maria Kobielska) and the social discourse with them (Michael Terwey, Lulu Anne Hansen). As museum experts, we can mediate if we can engage in scientific dialogue between what is hidden, concealed or denied, and what needs to be reconsidered, seen and treated (Solveig Hanusardóttir Olsen). The examples presented here from Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Northern Ireland, Norway, Poland and Sweden provide insights into an international, multifaceted museum life. Our goal and desire is to initiate and intensify professional exchange and joint learning across all cultural boundaries with concrete proposals for solutions to problematic aspects of museum work.

The editorial team is pleased now that the majority of the conference papers will be published as Volume 7 of the series *Beiträge zur Museologie* (Contributions to Museology) and at the same time as the first e-publication by ICOM Germany. I would like to thank all those involved who lent their support – in particular the colleagues from the national ICOM committees in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, with whom we jointly organised the conference and who helped us with their publication experience. We also like to thank the authors for their contributions, patience and goodwill in our publication project. Last but not least, the publication platform Arthistoricum.net should be thanked for the advice and support provided during the production process.

We are sure that the contributions made during this conference in Helsingborg will enable our dear colleagues to more easily and bravely face and handle such 'difficult issues'.

Welcome address
Mats Sander, Mayor of Helsingborg

Welcome to Sweden, Skåne and Helsingborg!

We are very grateful for hosting the ICOM conference 2017. I want to thank all of you who have been involved along the way, putting your time and effort in to making this great event happen.

I was asked to say something about museums. So once upon a time we needed a new city museum. Many discussions and negotiations were held during the years to come. And the result/outcome was this house that you are in right now. Dunker's House of Culture. A versatile house of arts and culture. Not a museum. Just a small part of it is that. Some people are still missing a museum. Later this year a museum will be a guest here in the building. The name is… – The Museum of Failure.

I took a glance in your programme and noticed that it is full of interesting events. I do think that you will leave Helsingborg absolutely exhausted. I hope you will be inspired, with a big smile and of course, with a feeling of wanting to come back to Helsingborg.

I wish all of you a fruitful conference!
Thank You!

Welcome address
Katherine Hauptman, President ICOM Sweden

How to learn good things from difficult issues in museums? – it is often said that museums hold the collective memory of society. This is a great responsibility and possibly more of a wild vision than a realistic task. Nevertheless, this is our aim and one of the tasks for museums in society. To understand a specific museum collection, you must understand the context of time and place of its origin and of the collection process. It is obvious that in a rear-view mirror things and people from history have been are missing out. The three papers we are about to hear are different approaches to make the museum more inclusive and address topics, people, conflicts and competence that have been absent.

If we share a past, but do not share the same memories about that past, the society is in trouble. Therefore, we need to talk more thoroughly to each other. This was obvious already to the first ICOM president and the same insight has been a pillar for the international museum collaboration ever since. When ICOM was founded 1946 Chauncey J. Hamlin argued that museums have a key role in building the future, and that people, sometimes even former enemies, should unite through their common interest in history and culture. As a mission to connect more countries and museums to ICOM Hamlin sought cooperation around the world and stated that: "Through museums man may grow to understand all other men in time and place."

After World War II many countries faced the difficult task of re-building destroyed environments and communities, as well as to regain confidence among people and governments. It is not surprising that one of the growing needs of the time also was to recapture lost histories in museums. As Hamlin noted, the curiosity about unknown matters is a strong glue when caring about people and the future of society. This is true not only for the happy histories, but also for the difficult issues of the past, and for how museums have dealt with such topics in the past.

The task of making difficult histories easier to understand for more people has stayed important, not least today when democratic rights are again challenged in several countries. Museum work, with respect and recognition of many people's histories, art and culture, is one crucial part of building democratic societies.

During the three conference days in Helsingborg we will touch upon many aspects of objects and stories that are contested or sensitive to handle in museums. We will discussed the individual professional choices and what it means to take risks in museums. Matters of political influence, conflicts and community relations will also be in focus. So will be collecting hidden histories, the implications of dark narratives, and a wide spectrum of different ethical challenges. Hopefully there will be something to provoke your mind for everyone.

Some of the issues that will be raised will lead to follow up questions about how future museums can develop to deal with them pro-actively. For example, strategic documents are helpful to raise questions about action in difficult situations, or to analyse the risks if the museum only play it safe. New competences are needed in the future museum that interacts with different communities. And a continuing debate is necessary about the changes in professional voices of museums that become more inclusive. How does such a development affect the museum's role in society?

My wish is that we continue to dig deeper together in proud histories as well as in to the sore and dark things that needs to be examined more thoroughly. Museum professionals have strong voices by their experience from heritage work, their deep historical knowledge, and training in critical thinking. Therefore, museums have important roles in the shaping of society with space for everyone. Continue taking the lead in discussions about difficult issues, in the museums and in the public debate.

As the president of ICOM Sweden I am very proud of the opportunity to host this international conference in Helsingborg, which was jointly arranged by the ICOM Nord countries and ICOM Germany. A special welcome to Suay Aksoy, president of ICOM. We are honoured to have you opening the conference with an important keynote.

My deepest thanks to our partners in the national committees of Denmark, Finland, Germany, Iceland and Norway. Without your fabulous work we would miss out on many thought-provoking discussions and on new museum connections for an even stronger future collaboration.

A warm welcome to the Conference *Difficult Issues in Museums* in Helsingborg, Sweden!

Welcoming speech
Suay Aksoy, President ICOM

Dear Colleagues,

It is my pleasure and privilege to be with you here today in the delightful city of Helsingborg. I thank you for your kind invitation and extend warm greetings to all participants who have made the effort to gather here from near and far for this important joint International Conference of the ICOM Committees of Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark and Germany.

Since early May I have attended a good number of conferences, all over the world from Kyoto to Calgary to Copenhagen and the theme of the conferences and consequently of my talks was one way or another the theme of the International Museum Day 2017 as it is here today. And, I have at least one more meeting to participate around the same theme before the end of the year. Initially I thought this was happening to me because I was the president but then gradually I started to understand why I have been so much in demand with this theme. Knowing where I come from, you wanted to hear the first-hand experience of not being able to speak the unspeakable. But I may surprise you with the strength of museums anywhere in the world.

On the 5th of July this year, a group of 10 human rights activists attending a meeting on the Princes' Islands in Istanbul were taken into custody and 6 of them were arrested on the 18th of July. Among them was Peter Steudner, a German citizen who was only an educator of human rights with no special relationship to Turkey or the Turkish chapter of the Human Rights International and he had not spoken a word at that meeting.

A week after this, there was a meeting the venue of which was again the same island of the Princes's Islands, this time though on the premises of the Museum of the Islands to discuss the strategy for cultural activities of the Islands' Municipality for 2018 as well as the exhibition programme of the museum. I was invited because I have been involved with this small city museum since the day of its inception.

The meeting gave us the opportunity to visit the temporary outdoor exhibition at the museum entitled *Caiques of Exile* (Boats of Exile), created and curated by a textile artist who collected and restored old castaway boats for

the occasion, dressed them up with new sails and dedicated to each one of them the story of a person who either came to the island or was sent away, either way to live in exile. Among them were some notables like for example Trotsky who was exiled from Stalin's Soviet Union and spent time there writing and fishing. There was also a boat dedicated to a musician, Gomidas Vartabed, an Armenian resident of the island. On this boat's label was first a quote from a book written by a survivor of the so-called journey and then a short note on history. The note said,

> On Saturday, 4th of April, 1915 Armenian intellectuals, among them reporters, artists, politicians, lawyers, doctors and reverends, were arrested and sent on a long journey by train from Haydarpaşa – from which most did not return. Gomidas Vartabed who had devoted all his energy to music since his childhood, was among those whose door was knocked in that night.

It is not easy to find such eloquently told, short but crystal clear stories of what happened in 1915 and with such impact. This is how museums work, how they make memory. This is in fact what makes museums relevant in a most fundamental way.

There have not been many such exhibitions in Turkey talking about the difficult pages of the country's history. And, when there was one it was not developed by a museum but by a civil societal organisation like the exhibition entitled *Never Again! Facing the Past and Apology* in 2013 which however did not have the so-called Armenian deportations as one of the cases it tackled. But the introductory panel and the introduction of the accompanying book almost overtly referred to it, overt enough to inspire the current President, then Prime Minister, to issue a statement of condolences in April the following year.

As another recent example I am thinking of the civil war in Bosnia Herzegovina and the so-called ethnic cleansing in the 1990s. Not even in 2008 the museums from the Balkan states were ready to touch on this topic when they had a meeting in Belgrade to investigate the question of reconciliation through museum work. Perhaps not enough time had passed to tackle such a painful experience.

One wonders how long a time must pass before parties are ready or strong enough to say what they have done or experienced? Does it take a bulky group of victims in order to feel free and unashamed to express one's agony and say the unspeakable?

It is worth mentioning that it was ICOM who stepped in, with UNESCO's support, to provide expertise and start-up funding for a travelling exhibition project about the Balkan region that was to be realised jointly with the national and history museums from the states of former Yugoslavia with also support from the neighbouring countries. The exhibition *Imagining the Balkans* was then opened in Slovenia by the General Director of UNESCO and the President of ICOM in April 2013.

Reconciliation appears as a post-trauma action that takes place only after decades have passed. It takes time to prepare the communities for reconciliation. So, the earlier the efforts start, the earlier the peace is instituted.

Then it is justified to ask, can we not do something when things are in the making, when they are happening. Why are museums able to talk about trauma only decades after it occurs? Is this era too fast for museums? Could it be that the format of our structures and their mode of operation require updating? But then… how much is this a matter of relevance for museums, how much does it serve their relevance?

In fact, cultural organisations like biennales and festivals of periodic or temporary nature or art and cultural centres have probably been more prompt in responding to developments in our world. Have they been perhaps more sensitive and also more practical as far as innovative installations and narratives are concerned? Recently I read a review about *documenta 14*, the fourteenth edition of the exhibition of contemporary art which takes place every five years in Kassel, Germany, which just ended several days ago. The title said "The most important thing at the documenta 14 was not an artwork. It is evidence." And in the subtitle, it was written, "An analysis of a neo-Nazi murder investigation redefines the limits of what art is for."

The so-called evidence was a video that presented the results of the collaborative work accomplished by the research agency Forensic Architecture together with the Society of Friends of Halit, the 21-year old victim. The London-based research agency formed at Goldsmiths had previously investigated war crimes in Gaza, former Yugoslavia, and Syria.

It is very interesting to see a piece, in an art exhibition, being described with terminology that is much more pertinent to the museum vernacular than to art: evidence!... If art organisations can borrow ideas from museums, then can we not borrow ideas and methods from them?

But there are also museums that speak loudly through their temporary exhibitions if not through the permanent ones. In this respect, city museums have done some remarkable work. In their quest for collecting the

contemporary and serving as a forum, a discussion platform for their respective citizens, they have tackled many a burning issue ranging from old age to urban regeneration and to migration. The ICOM International Committee on City Museums, CAMOC, has also been working on the topic of migration for several years now and currently spreading its efforts with a regional approach partnering with another ICOM Committee, ICR, the one about regional museums. City museums in Sweden, Germany and Netherlands, to name a few, have started looking into the current migration phenomenon but the refugee crisis has not so much entered the museums yet.

Having said this, I was happy to read on the blog of the Helsingborg conference about the prospective establishment of an international refugee museum in Denmark. It said "the museum will tell the story of the 250,000 German refugees who arrived in the German-occupied Denmark after having fled from their homes due to the progress of the Red Army at the end of World War Two." So, after about seven decades there is this museum project. It is a challenging but also a useful story, as they stated in the blog, especially in a time when Europe faces huge challenges regarding refugees, which also will be included in the museum.

There is perhaps something about the format and operational mode of museums that does not allow them to react and act in the face of new developments as promptly as they could or devise innovative ways of saying the unspeakable. This may be worthwhile to investigate for museums to serve society better.

Museums can be versatile and they may have a myriad of creative ways to convey a message. This is a trait we must treasure and nourish also. It has a lot to do with being relevant… But then there is also the question, how far can and must museums go to prove themselves relevant? Isn't the unsurpassed authenticity of their collections or their educational power sufficient to prove this? Here we face a practical and ethical question at the same time. But I will bypass this debate here, and leave it to the proper committees. Instead, I will move to ICOM's relevance beyond that of the individual museums. I will reiterate an often-cited quote from Bernice Murphy:

> While continuing to be a strong organisation of members, and promoting professional training, programmes and co-operation among museums internationally, ICOM has a much greater potential to realise. ICOM needs to think of itself not merely as a facilitator of professional activities but also as an organisation that itself addresses and serves society and its development.

So, she is talking about ICOM's relevance and this has a lot to do with the work of our National, International, Regional and Standing Committees. From the mail exchanges and talks we have amongst colleagues, members, committee chairs, different layers of ICOM governance and with potential recruits, as well as from our own observations, one easily detects it is high time to rethink the functionality of our structure to secure an ongoing relevance for ICOM.

Do our International Committees cater to the new themes and concerns that dominate our museums and the world today? Being preoccupied by climate change or economic crisis, migration or the disabled, do we have a committee on sustainability or one on diversity? UNESCO talks about sites when cultural property protection is the issue, do we have any committee addressing the site museums without which there would be no proper documentation of the site and its holdings? What about experimental, underwater or industrial archaeology, or for that matter modern history, do they get the attention they deserve? Or are there leakages to other organisations in search of such attention? Are the structures and themes of our committees in line with the times? Do they do any self-assessment or are they assessed in any way?

There is luckily a bottom-up process in ICOM that has become more vocal recently. Hence, we had the recommendation from the International Committees at the ICOM Advisory meetings last June that advised the forming a Working Group to explore and discuss the future, the prospects for the International Committees, and it is on its way. Our International Committees are densely populated and chaired by the members of the National Committees of ICOM NORD and Germany. So, it is likely some pertinent discussions on the current relevance and formulation of the International Committees will be taking place here in Helsingborg parallel to the discussions around the conference theme. I believe this will certainly inform and inspire the mentioned Working Group on the future of the ICs.

All these are sure to raise our collective awareness on the wealth of difficult issues at stake concerning the relevance of museums and of organs of ICOM. But then is this not one of the reasons why we long to come together every year?

I wish all of you a successful conference and thank you once again for your invitation to be here, and for your attention!

Introduction to the conference theme
Stefan Bohman, ICOM Sweden

Difficult issues at museums or
difficult heritage at museums,
difficult questions at museums,
difficult items at museums

I had already written most of this conference introduction, but by a coincidence I two weeks ago visited Charlottesville, where there had been a riot about taking down a statue of Robert Edward Lee (1807–70), the leading Confederate General during the American Civil War. One person was murdered by right wing demonstrators protesting about taking down the statue.

Then I visited the chapel and museum over Robert E. Lee in Lexington, where he died, very close to Charlottesville. In this museum he is presented as a noble gentleman and a brilliant general, a hero for the whole of the USA. A rather common picture in especially the south of USA. Someone to admire, more or less (fig. 1, p. 20).

But when I visited the very new museum of African Americans in Washington, Robert E. Lee was defined as the general who fought against their freedom, to preserve slavery and expand it, and to split the USA into two nations. Lee with his army killed hundred thousands of North Americans to reach those goals. A completely different story.

The clash between those two stories of the civil war and its general led to death in Charlottesville. But in the Lexington museum you could buy a nice cup with his name, a book about his noble character, and a finger doll for children to play with.

The stories told at the museums and the African American museum where completely different, from separate political, social and cultural views. Perhaps neither of them where false, but there were different decisions about the interpretation of the cultural heritage.

With this introduction I will return to ICOM, and to the conference in Paris 2017. The keynote speaker Chris Whitehead talked about the subject 'contested history'. And he asked this question: "What stories are told, and what stories are not told?" A question more actual than ever, and as I see it – the central question for this whole conference! Just to give some teasers of what we are going to listen to and discuss here at Dunkers:

Fig. 1: Lee Chapel in Lexington, Virginia: statue of Robert Edward Lee (1807–70) designed by Edward Valentine. Photo: Stefan Bohman, 2017

» How to handle exhibitions in the Estonian National Museum about the Russian speaking minority? What challenges occurred in the communication with the Russian speaking community?
» How to balance aesthetical and historical validity above economic growth, for example in the Saga Vax/Silicone Museum in Iceland, where a more sensational exhibition can affect visitors, but the museum staff want a more realistic and distanced narrative.
» How to present the difficult history about the German presence in Finnish Lapland 1941–44? A dark heritage and difficult history that continues to be a sensitive issue in the local heritage politics.
» What to do with a painting of a whale hunt in the National Gallery of the Faroe Islands, at the same time as whale hunting today is condemned?

I long to hear those and the other presentations!!

There are a lot of museological studies today about museums as 'memory-institutions', but not so many about museums as 'forgetting/omitting-institutions'. To remember and to omit are always the different sides of the same coin! But the problems about contested history, about omitted history and histories are more and more discussed today, also in ICOM. The conference in Paris 2017 is an example of this. We can see it for example in ICOM MEMO and ICOM COMCOL, and in more ICOM committees.

There is rather a lot of research today about heritage in general and about difficult heritage. I will give just some examples. A starting point is David Lowenthal when he in his famous book *The Past Is a Foreign Country* (1985, 206) writes: "Above all, memory transforms the experienced past into what we think it should have been."

Cultural heritage can be defined as cultural expressions, material or non-material, that groups in the society decide are important and have a symbolic value interesting enough to be called cultural heritage. Therefore, it shall be protected in a special way.

Cultural heritage is always a matter of choice. Just to make an example: the Finnish researcher Ulla-Maija Peltonen writes in her interesting research about the infected question about memorials from both the red and the white sides in the civil war in Finland 1918. She then asks the very important question: "Who has the right to decide what to be remembered or forgotten from the past?"

Cultural heritage is always a question of power. Who in the society has the right to decide what to be defined as a cultural heritage, and how it shall be interpreted. In my own research about museums in Sweden we can see during our history several actors with a claim to decide about cultural heritage, often fighting each other:

» Royal court and nobilities, most 17th–19th century.
» Professional cultural heritage management, with a scientific claim, has grown most during the 20th century.
» Politicians, both local and central. Always actual.
» Financiers, those who have the money, that museums more or less must adjust to.
» The public, as a result of the demand on museums (and their own interest), to attract more and more visitors.

But to be a little more concrete – how does this apply to museums today? Sharon MacDonald is one among other researchers who writes about difficult questions at museums. For example: How museums in Germany and France present the Second World War? One conclusion she makes is that Germany the last years has done a lot to present their role in the war in a complex and problematized way. In comparison, for example, French museums much more talks about the resistance movement then the Vichy reign.

I can see this change in my own research, for example in The Wagner Museum in Bayreuth, where Wagner's antisemitism and his followers' close contact to Hitler was more or less neglected in the former museum installations, but now is accurately presented in the new museum 2016. Now the museum for example will show how Wagner's daughter-in-law Winifred Wagner kept Hitler as an idol picture on her writing desk, and much more.

There have been several projects to inspire museums to present contested history and difficult questions. The Norwegian museum project *BRUDD* is an example, which discussed exhibitions about, for example, the much-criticised whale hunt, about Nazi prisoners in Norway, homosexuality among animals, and more subjects.

In Sweden we had some years ago a project about difficult items in museums, for example how to document and exhibit pornography, instruments made for suicide, items from catastrophes. Can the whole front, a gigantic piece, from the sunken ship *Estonia,* were more than 800 persons died, be a museum object, or is it something else? Some thought it was irreverent to make it just a museum item.

Or this completely different item: It was an infected discussion at the Nordic Museum if pieces from a beggar's tent outside Stockholm were possible to collect and preserve, like this rest from a food package with dirt and all (fig. 2, p. 23). But the discussion also landed in – do the museum want to censor heritage from the poorest in the society!?

In USA, to take just another example, it was the very infected discussion if, and how, to exhibit the plane *Enola Gay*, that dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima. A discussion that ended in a stop for the exhibition.

Those very concrete questions lead us to the last subject in my little presentation. At the ICOM conference in Paris 2017 Jette Sandahl said in a working seminar: "We need to have strategies and techniques for handling difficult heritage." I fully agree! We must not only discuss how museums handle difficult heritage and contested history in theory and in general, but also more concrete knowledge about how we as museums do it in practice.

Fig. 2: Piece from a beggar's tent outside Stockholm. Photo: O. Wallgren, Riksutställningar, 2001

I have been asked to be a little provocative in my presentation, so here is a little contribution from me. First: The Norwegian project *BRUDD* made up a little list of arguments they met from museums, why they could *not* take up more difficult questions or contested history at their museums. Perhaps some of you can recognise yourselves:

» My God – how politically correct
» Difficult questions are important – but not here
» We don't have the time
» If we had more money…
» This is not in our museum regulations
» We must work with our collections
» Our visitors want a jolly time at the museum

Second: After my research about people museums and their more concrete ways of forgetting/omitting difficult questions about the persons: how do we do in our everyday work in museums with difficult questions and contested history? Just some examples as I have met them:

Full account. The museum in exhibitions and other material talks about the difficult questions. But of course – this is always a problem. You can never tell everything, so you must choose what to write and exhibit, even if you want to be as open minded as possible.

Omitting. The problematic facts don't exist in the museum's exhibitions or in any other museum material. For example: because the staff has decided that those problems don't belong to the plan for the museum, or that the facts are so spiteful that they can be ignored, even if the public discussion about the problems are wide and important.

Double bookkeeping. The museum presents its subject in different ways – one for the ordinary public, without the difficulties, and one for the special interested and experts, where the difficult questions are discussed – for example in books in the museum shop, in special articles on the homepage or in specialized seminars.

Minimizing. The problematic facts are presented in the museum, but in a minimized way, perhaps in a remote corner of the museum, often as cold facts without discussing underlying causes, and – as there had been no discussions about it in the society.

Reduction of responsibility. The museums claim that everyone did the same. The society during the time 'was just like that', and a person could not do anything else. The historical situation justified a person's or a group's behaviour and makes it therefore less interesting to exhibit.

Comparison. The person did really do bad things – but – in comparison to his or her contribution in society it is of lesser importance. As a *successful* writers/composers/artists/politicians etc. the problematic questions about them can be omitted or minimized at the museum.

Change of subject. The Museum concentrates on other subjects than the person in spite of that the museum is in his or her name. For example – the main subject of the museum is the architecture, the relatives, the persons clothes, or as an example of how people in general lived during this time.

Can you recognize any of this?

To end where I started: even President Trump commented on the fight about the statue over Robert E. Lee, how to use history and the use of its culture heritage. He said: "So this week, it is Robert E Lee… I wonder, is it George Washington next week? Or is it Thomas Jefferson the week after? You know, you really have to ask yourself, where does it stop."

Yes, where does it stop? This is our responsibility as museum workers to discuss and to take a view on. What stories do we tell, and why? Is history just a bunch of equivalent stories? Of course not – we have a responsibility to form an opinion on how to present both history and its stories: how to interpret the cultural heritage. We have decisions to make. Therefore, this conference is very important!

Welcome!!

Photo: Stäbler

Ethical Challenges

Difficult Objects

Changing Communities

Contested Histories

Public Responsibilities

Unfolding Dark Narrativs

Collecting Hidden Contemporary

Bridging History with the Present

Kathrin Pabst

The individual's needs versus the needs of a broader public

A short introduction to a central moral challenge museum employees could face when working with contested, sensitive histories

Abstract Over the past decades many museums have seen their role become subject to significant change. From being essentially institutions committed to bridging the gap between a nation's past and present, they have gradually assumed a supplementary role as social actors with a special opportunity for giving people often neglected a chance to be heard and seen. A multitude of strong narratives, many of them traumatic, have found their way into the museums and in some way radically transformed the working days of the museum professionals. In the wake of this development a number of moral challenges have appeared, e.g. how to deal with sensitive, contested history, how to master delicate interview situations or how to reconcile professional obligations with empathy, compassion and solidarity. The purpose of this conference paper is to introduce briefly one of these challenges.

Keywords moral challenges, professional ethics, personal narratives, sensitive topics

Introduction

My speech at the Helsingborg conference was titled *Moral challenges for museum professionals. A short overview* and aimed to give the audience a sizeable idea of the comprehensive reviews and considerations which are needed when working with sensitive histories – especially when contested histories are involved. The presentation based mainly on the findings of my research connected to a PhD-thesis. In this paper, I would like to concentrate on only one of these challenges: the moral balancing of individual needs versus the needs of a broader public.[1] In my PhD-thesis, where this challenge was among many other findings, my research focused on the following: What are the moral challenges employees at a museum of cultural history face when dealing with sensitive, contemporary-related exhibitions that involve external collaboration, how are they handled and how should they be handled? These topics were examined using research questions that attempted to shed light on how interactions happen and how morally relevant decisions are dealt with internally in museums, what moral challenges arise in cooperation with individuals and further dissemination of their stories, and how museum employees handle the tension between facts and experience. My starting point has always been – and still is – the museum employees, the framework in which they work, and the needs that become visible in projects on contested, sensitive history. Several ethical theories may provide valuable insight and advice while facing these challenges, and in my work I have used mainly professional ethics, consequence ethics, deontological ethics, recognition theory and relational ethics (Pabst 2014; Pabst 2016).

When working with sensitive, contested history there are many considerations which must be observed and many needs to be balanced. Projects may deal with themes of war, violence in closed institutions, violation of

1 The thesis as a whole was published in 2014 by the University of Agder and then in a shorter version in 2016 by the Norwegian Museumsforlaget. The latter has now been translated into English and will be available online for free downloading by the end of 2018. In the thesis the reader will find more than 1,200 notes with detailed information about sources and relevant literature, and the compressed version still has almost 500 notes. This conference paper is in addition a shorter version of an article published in the Museum International "Museums and Contested Histories" by ICOM in the end of 2018.

human rights, the limits of the freedom of speech or the treatment of minorities. It may also touch upon the dark sides of contemporary society: poverty, mental health, or the abuse of alcohol. It is common to all these issues that the themes may trigger strong emotions and reactions among all persons involved: the individuals who are about to relate something difficult and painful they have experienced, visitors who must react to these testimonies and handle their own feelings attached to the revealed stories, the local society and its members who might have to reconsider how they understand their own identity, and not least the museum employees who must respond simultaneously to their own and other people's feelings.

I take my point of departure in projects of cooperation, which aim at producing an exhibition – an ordinary museal channel of dissemination – which is addressed to a broad public. Here, the museum employees might work together with individuals from the local society, contributing with personal experiences and reflections connected to some selected incidents or experiences from their own lives. Such a narrative is necessarily subjective and coloured by earlier experiences. Such experiences might have been traumatic and are difficult to handle, and talking about them to a museum staff member who is perforce a stranger can be emotionally hard. Therefore it is very important how these persons are met by the staff members and how their narratives are prepared for a broad audience. The fact that cooperation with individuals is right and important is confirmed by relevant literature within museology and psychology. Two aspects may be emphasized in this connection: a) the audience/the society becomes more strongly affected and learns more when exhibitions are based upon personal narratives, and b) it is of positive value for individuals that the museum disseminates their personal narratives, even if these are based upon painful experiences.

Knowledge, experience, moral analysis of the consequences of the different courses of action for all parties involved and the individual employee's character and handling of feelings are crucial when one decides how to act in a morally challenging situation. All these factors are to a great extent marked by *feelings*, both one's own and the ability to immerse oneself in other people's feelings. Since every assessment of situation and following action leads to new experience which change thought patterns and future actions in similar situations, the importance of feelings cannot be overestimated. The feelings of the participants, the audience and the employees characterize all courses of action and thereby all work on and repercussions from the exhibition.

The individual's needs versus the needs of a broader public

How should one attend to individual persons in the best possible manner and at the same time cover what one considers to be the needs of a broader audience or the society as such? This is always the crucial question when meeting individual persons face to face – we observe their vulnerability and are touched by the emotions which appear in the conversation.

Take for example Thomas, a young father, who participated in a project about poverty in the South of Norway.[2] He told us in detail about the feeling of having to choose between bread for him and his daughter and letting the child participate at a friend's birthday party, which demands a small present. He felt he could not talk with anybody about his lack of money for even the most essential things: who would understand, when it felt like that most of the population in Norway had more than enough money? His and the other participants' stories were mainly about the same: guilt and shame of being a 'loser' in a county where everybody else seems to be successful, while simultaneously feeling invisible. The feeling of shame often leads to loneliness and social isolation. It seems too hard to tell anyone what has happened or is going on, and one tries hard to keep up a façade. This again means that people with identical or similar experiences will not be able to realize that they actually are not the only ones suffering from the same feeling. The museum felt that these stories had to be told to enlighten the public about the fact that more than 10 percent of the population in Norway is poor, with huge consequences for the kids and youngsters involved. To contribute to creating better living conditions for the poor required making these facts public in an efficient way. But to enlighten and awake feelings which might lead to a higher degree of understanding, the participants' feelings of shame and guilt had to be transferred, ideally by using videotapes showing participants telling their stories. Of course, that was out of the question: the participants agreed to talk to us only if we guaranteed total anonymity. So, we searched for a different way to disseminate the stories. In this case we ended up with writing the stories down and getting the acceptance for the words used before engaging actors to record the stories as if they were their own. In the exhibition we created the illusion of being in a room full of 100 people whereof 13

2 This is an example from a later exhibition at the Vest-Agder Museum and is not covered in my thesis. All names in the examples are fictional.

Fig. 1: The spotlight focused on the face of the person speaking. He or she had no face, but the age and sex were the same as for the informant. ©Vest-Agder Museum, 2016

‘told’ their story loud and clearly, one after the other. The light in the room switched from face to face as the people ‘spoke’ and it was not possible for the visitor to escape – he or she had to consider how long they were capable of hearing their unknown fellowman tell how challenging the experiences of poverty were for them (fig. 1).

But challenges can also be related to the quantity of information we feel the visitor can absorb. In our contact with individuals who participated in an exhibition project about religion in Southern Norway, Hanna told us in a touching meeting about her former life in a closed religious community, which still is active in the area. For Hanna, it caused a great deal of pain. She was still, more than 20 years after leaving the community, not able to hug her own kids, because of her own early childhood when she was taught that all kinds of physical contact between kids and their parents were forbidden.

Her contribution to the exhibition gradually became very extensive since she wanted to confront her past once and for all. Beside a text of several pages where she among other things wrote about the lack of care and organizational culture in the sect, two poems, and a survey of what she considered to be the 100 commandments of Pietism, she wanted to include several self-composed surveys of literature connected to Pietism and what she considered the possible psychological consequences of a childhood spent in such a pietistic community. This case was challenging for many reasons, first and foremost because of the personal meeting with a woman who obviously struggled after many difficult experiences in childhood, and which still marked her life. Hanna expressed repeatedly that participating in the exhibition was her way of confronting a difficult childhood and a possibility of having sorrow and anger dealt with. On the other hand, we – the museum employees – had to find a way of presenting the extensive material, so that it could be appreciated by the public. As in several other cases, we consciously refrained from editing or changing texts, and rather worked on alternatives to present the material (fig. 2, p. 34).

Thomas and Hanna touched us listening to them face-to-face, and they expressed later on how much the meetings with our staff meant to them. To be recognized implies being seen and heard. When people experience that a museum takes interest in their history and chooses to retell it in an exhibition visited by many, they feel lifted up as individuals. If they simultaneously experience that their own history becomes part of a larger entity showing a diversity of experiences, they will in addition to their own recognition feel that they contribute to a common social benefit. Edited in a good way, visitors could be able to recognize themselves in what is presented, which in turn would make fewer people feel excluded or ignored. To let individual persons tell about their own personal experiences which others may recognize as their own or at least which lead to the recognition of certain feelings, can therefore lead to a situation where both the individual contributor and the visitor become able to see themselves in what is told. Thereby they could get a feeling of being not alone and actually an important part of the diversity. Here it is taken for granted that the narrative refers to values which are considered good and important for the community and the development of the society.

I have interviewed several museum employees who have worked closely with external participants and their personal narratives, and all were unison in their evaluation: even though individual persons did not want the museum employee to act as a psychologist, they found it crucial to be able to speak

Fig. 2: In an exhibition about religion in Southern Norway, we developed shapes of women and men, each of them representing one of our participants. A short and crucial excerpt from their personal contribution was used to attract the visitor's attention. Interactive touchscreens made it possible for the visitor to explore the whole contribution afterwards. © Vest-Agder Museum, 2011

out about a difficult situation. Being seen and heard by a professional working at an institution with considerable credibility in society, has in all probability contributed positively to the individual person's process of coming to terms with his misfortune. Gaynor Kavanagh, English Professor of Museum Science, underlines in one of her publications that museum employees at times can feel like social workers and that the responsibility they carry in many ways corresponds to this in practice. They may do well, but also cause damage if they do not act with a great deal of moral integrity (Kavanagh 2000).

In all cases, the personal meeting had considerable consequences for the employee's choice of action. The employee reacted with an increased sense of responsibility faced with the trust they got from the individual persons:

The narratives had to be handled carefully. Some of the museums employees I interviewed mentioned the need to protect the individual contributors and all of them told of moral considerations which came out in favour of the individual person. Possible expectations held by the public in relation to the design and content of the exhibition, were similarly given less priority at the advantage of the needs of the individual person. The change took place due to a situational assessment of the options for action, in which the foreseeable consequences of the action were indispensable for deciding whether an action was considered morally right.

“This is about existential questions for human beings”, said one of my informants, and similar statements were made by the others, too. Here it is of importance to recognize that regarding the strong feelings involved, it is not only difficult to speak of sensitive themes and to meet the informants face-to-face; it is also demanding having to relate to such themes as visitors at an exhibition. Here are many traps we can fall into: What the visitors experience as difficult or controversial, could be related to the theme and the choice of dissemination method. The reactions could be directed towards the fact that it is demanding to take to one’s heart new knowledge, but could also be an expression of disagreement to the way the knowledge was presented. The own identity can be threatened by new information which leads to an urge to rethink basic assumptions about ones’ own life and offspring. An attempt to summarize and interpret the unexpected reactions which appeared in my empirical material showed certain patterns, at the same time as the reactions seem to have such a complex basis that it is impossible to predict all of them.

How to balance the needs according to ethical theory

In order to answer the question as to how this challenge should be met, the needs of two parties are of particular importance: Those of the individual and those of the public, which in turn is composed of a number of individuals. Whom and what should the museum employee be most loyal to? The individual, contributing with a personal account which is often difficult to share or a duty and commitment to concentrate on the museum’s social mission which demands dissemination of knowledge at a high professional level to a large number of people? Should the museum employee be a fellow human being, acting instinctively out of a gut feeling, or a professional, having the broad audience and the most effective dissemination schedules in mind?

Behind the intent to give priority to the needs of the individual are first and foremost concerns embedded in proximity ethics. Based on their "gut feeling" and considerations drawn from public morality, my informants chose to let the needs of the individuals prevail over the general needs all the parties involved felt they had, this because he or she was perceived as the weaker party – the one that needed more protection. In view of the museums' social role and their political assignment, the question is whether this is a correct procedure, or if the interests of the majority of the visitors more consistently should be given priority. If we start from the fact that museums are institutions whose mission is to disseminate new and important knowledge for the benefit of the society, and assume that the narratives of the individuals can be used to provoke feelings among the visitors, feelings which support and intensify the dissemination of knowledge, it is an open question whether museum professionals to a lesser extent should protect individuals and rather choose dissemination strategies aiming at a more straightforward exposition of individuals and their feelings.

Here is no space to go through an ethical analysis. Summing up very shortly, it is possible to say that the needs of individuals should be given priority. A human being should always be treated as a purpose in itself and never as a means to achieving some other purpose, which is essentially what Kant points out (Kant 2002). Psychologists emphasize the importance of being seen and heard, presupposed a careful approach where the focus is directed towards the needs of the individual. If there is not enough mindfulness, there would be a risk that individuals would not only drop out of the project, but also be exposed to new forms of trauma and offence. After having studied several museum exhibitions in Great Britain where the traumatic recollections of individuals were presented, Kavanagh, among others, sends out an insistent warning against underestimating how sensitive traumatic memories are for the individuals and how decisive it is to adopt a careful approach to all parties involved. "The process" is here to be understood as the cooperation with individuals during the period leading up to the opening of the exhibition, and as something which must be given priority at the cost of "the product," here understood as the accomplished exhibition as presented to the visitors (Kavanagh 2000; Kavanagh 2002).

There is no evidence that the stirring up of feelings among the visitors will always entail better learning and therefore result in enhanced dissemination of knowledge. There are several indications that certain dissemination tactics will support the pedagogical effect and that the feelings of the visitors are

pivotal. If so be the case it is essential to handle these feelings with care. Løgstrup's approach to the concept of confidence suggests that confidence gives power and requires responsibility, and implies that this double effect can be transposed, not only to a face-to-face encounter between a museum professional and an individual, but also, indirectly, to the confidence the visitors show to museum personnel in their capacity as professionals.

When visitors come to a museum they are confident that the museum employees take steps to make sure their visit will elicit learning, which includes being taken care of in a morally responsible manner. Any dissemination strategy which affects the visitors emotionally has to be assessed with a particular view to ensuring that it is for the benefit of the visitors.

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Satu Savia, Hanna Talasmäki

Post-mortem photographs – challenges and experiences of open access

Abstract Online access to difficult cultural heritage in photography collections raises many legal and ethical questions. Although the aim of museums and collective cultural organizations is an objective view of history, it is worth thinking how to represent post-mortem photographs online. This study attempts to initiate a discussion on the tradition of post-mortem photographs, discuss the meaning of those difficult and sensitive images and explore the challenges and experiences faced with providing online open access to post-mortem photographs.

Keywords post-mortem photographs, open access, legislation, online collections

1. Introduction

When publishing any kind of photographs online, a museum faces legislative boundaries and ethical questions. If a picture collection aims to publish especially sensitive photographs, such as post-mortem photographs, it has to give even more thought to several issues, such as: why it is important to make post-mortem photographs open and how to ensure that legislation and ethical issues are properly followed.

Helsinki City Museum published quite recently over 30,000 photographs online. This paper describes the process and focuses especially on post-mortem photographs. The paper first gives a brief overview of the studies of post-mortem photography. It will then move on to the tradition of post-mortem photography in Finland. Chapter 4 describes open access to museum collections in general and chapter 5 focuses on the challenges. Ethical issues are discussed in chapter 6 and an introduction to legal aspects is in chapter 7. In conclusion, we give examples of what kind of impact open access to post-mortem photographs has had on Helsinki City Museum.

2. Previous studies of post-mortem photographs

In Finland, there is no tradition of post-mortem photography research as in England and America (e.g. Burns 1990; Ruby 1995; Linkman 2006). Most of studies in Finland have been from the view point of ethnography, folkloristics or thanatology (e.g. Nenola 1985; Utriainen 1999; Kemppainen 2006; Hakola 2014; Laiho, Kaunonen and Aho 2014; Pajari 2014; Schuurman and Laurén 2016). Only a few Finnish research papers are discussing deeply post-mortem photographs in Finland. Some contributions about the subject do exist: e.g. Hannu Sinisalo's book (1981) and Seija Ulkuniemi's dissertation (2005, 75–76; 114–117), but most historical research of Finnish photography only briefly mentions the subject – sometimes only in caption of post-mortem photography (e.g. Kukkonen, Vuorenmaa and Hinkka 1992, 13; 61).

It is not difficult to understand why post-mortem photography has attracted so little attention in Finnish photography histories and among photography historians. Post-mortem photographs have not been at the center of picture collections. They are relatively few in comparison to the overall size of collections and they also somewhat hide inside the collections. As collections

Fig. 1: 4-year-old girl, Taimi Hildén (1907–11), at home. She died after a sledge fell on her in the yard of her home at Ruoholahdenkatu 2 in Helsinki. Photo: Atelier Apollo, 1911 © Helsinki City Museum. CC BY 4.0.

are arranged alphabetically by photographer or order and there is not an archive unit named post-mortem photographs, finding them is complicated. Also Helsinki City Museums Picture Collection's post-mortem photographs have been largely invisible before they have been opened online.

3. Tradition of post-mortem photography in Finland in the 19th and early 20th centuries

Post-mortem photography (also known as memorial portraiture or a mourning portrait) is the practice of photographing the recently deceased. These photographs of deceased loved ones were a normal part of American and European culture in the 19th and early 20th centuries. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, in post-mortem photographs the departed were

Fig. 2: Mrs Johanna Lyytikäinen in a coffin at the yard of her home at Punavuorenkatu 21. From the left: Johannes Lyytikäinen, the deceased's father-in-law, Arvi Lyytikäinen, engineer, her husband, Arvis's brother Leonard Lyytikäinen, his son Yrjö and wife Ida. Photo: unknown photographer, 1898 © Helsinki City Museum. CC BY 4.0.

photographed and memorialized in a studio or at the funeral. (Burns Archive 2016). As the example figures of this paper support, the tradition in Finland is quite similar to that in Europe, but has more to do with the Scandinavian tradition. In Scandinavia, it seems to be more popular to have photographs of the deceased in a coffin with a large group of family and funeral attendees. Post-mortem photographs were a remembrance for family members, and were often given *as carte de visite* to relatives. Requested by the grieving families, post-mortem photographs not only helped with grieving, but often represented the only visual memory of the deceased.

Figure one (p. 40) is a typical example of Finnish post-mortem photograph. It has been taken by professional photographer Atelier Apollo in 1911. The photographer was invited to the little girl's home. The white coffin has been put on the table with a white tablecloth. The deceased has white clothes, her head has been turned to the photographer and she has a garland on her head.

She has also small bouquet of lilies of the valley in her hand. The photograph shows the little girl as beautiful as possible, looking more like sleeping peacefully than dead.

Figure two (p. 41) shows the most common post-mortem photography style in Finland. Unknown photographs from the year 1898 shows the deceased, the mother of the family, in a coffin with her family posing behind. The black coffin has been brought out in winter and decorated with flowers and pine branches. The deceased has white clothes and she looks peaceful.

Both figures are evidence of a time when death was a normal part of life. People died in their homes and they were prepared for the funeral at home. This tradition continued in Finland until the Second World War. After it, death and the funerals moved from homes to hospitals and to the hands of professionals like doctors and undertakers. As Michael C. Kearl suggests: "With modernization, medicine has replaced religion as the major institutional molder of cultural death fears and immortality desires" (Kearl 1989, 406). Little by little, the tradition of post-mortem photography decreased (Sinisalo 1981, 60). Death and post-mortem photographs became taboo. As Freud argued in psychoanalytical terms, taboos are rooted in unconscious guilt and are productive of much neurotic suffering (Freud 1989).

Since the late 1960s, media images of the dead started to be a part of photojournalism. Media has made death and photographs of deceased part of our everyday life – yet most of us are less comfortable with the idea of photographing post-mortem pictures for private use. As Jay Ruby claims, people who wish to obtain post-mortem or funeral photographs face a personal conflict and potential public disapproval it they take a picture or commission someone to do so (Ruby 1995, 25).

4. Open access to museum collections

Providing open access to collections has been a prominent trend in the museum world in recent years. Acclaimed international museums that have made their collections available online as web-quality or print-quality versions include, for instance, The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam.

In Finland, opening collections online is a logical continuation of Finland's culture policy and co-operation in the gallery, library, archive and museum (GLAM) sector in Finland. The Finnish Ministry of Education and

Culture founded the National Digital Library project 2008–17. The Finna open access search service (finna.fi) was created in the project (The National Library of Finland).

The Helsinki City Museum Picture Collection is cultural and historical. The museum has opened a collection of data and photographs via Finna since the year 2014. At the moment, Helsinki City Museum has published more than 30,000 photographs under a Creative Commons BY 4.0 license in Finna. A Creative Commons Attribution license CC BY 4.0 (Creative Commons 2018) allows use for any purpose, including commercial. The museum also offers access to photographs via its own search service Helsinkiphotos (helsinkiphotos.fi).

5. Publishing photographs – challenges

Before Helsinki City Museum published photographs online under a Creative Commons BY 4.0 license, there was thorough discussion of the pros and cons among curators. The advantages of open access were, for example, increased use of Picture Collection and the disadvantages were, for example, a loss of image fees. Also lots of rethinking and studying of complex legislation was done. Decision-making had a good base on the museum's vision, goals and focus points, such as 'open access to materials' and 'increasing the city residents' influencing opportunities'. Even so, some concerns about the idea of publishing post-mortem photographs were raised. Some might even be called fears.

After private photographs have been accessioned to museum from private collections become part of museum collection, they sift from private to public spaces, and from private research to public resources, as Edwards and Morton have described (Edwards and Morton 2015).

Post-mortem photographs could be seen as essentially private and sharing them online is definitely an issue of privacy. It is also a fact that by publishing post-mortem photographs online, the museum lost control over who is allowed to use images and how. There is a huge difference between collections in situ and collections online. Post-mortem photographs aren't always easy to find from collections, even with help from a curator. Most of the post-mortem photographs in the Picture Collection are listed as portraits by a person's name or family name. The situation is totally different with online published photographs. Due to metadata included with photographs, they

are easy to find and with a Creative Commons BY 4.0 license they are available to everyone.

6. Publishing post-mortem photographs – ethics

Open access to post-mortem photographs needed also careful thinking and a discussion of ethical issues. As a museum collection, Helsinki City Museum has to implement the museum ICOM Code of Ethics principle: "Museums have the duty to acquire, preserve and promote their collections as a contribution to safeguarding the natural, cultural and scientific heritage" (ICOM 2017, 9).

Post-mortem photographs had been mostly donated to the museum by private persons. Some of the donations are over 100 years old. Still some family members of the deceased in post-mortem photography can exist. What if families or relatives see the museum as violating their privacy with open access? As most of the post-mortem photographs published online were more than 60 years old, the museum took a so-called positive risk and published them. It was also decided to immediately take an online photograph off the web if someone it concerned so requested. The ICOM Code of Ethics, cap. 4.4, gave also support to possible conflicts (ICOM 2017, 25). It is not specifically for photographs but is still a good code to lean on:

> Requests for removal from public display of human remains or material of sacred significance from the originating communities must be addressed expeditiously with respect and sensitivity. Requests for the return of such material should be addressed similarly. Museum policies should clearly define the process for responding to such requests.

It was also important for the museum to ensure valid metadata – especially with contextual information. Without giving open access to metadata, understanding the deeper historic context of post-mortem photographs might be seen as uncomfortable and morbid.

7. The legal background of publishing picture collections

The legal background of publishing photographs is based on the Finnish copyright and privacy laws. The implementation of the *General Data Protection*

Regulation 2016/679 (GDPR) also dispensed the regulation in publishing the metadata. A photograph of an identifiable person is considered to be personal data. GDPR affects museums and archives and other memory organizations who collect identifying information about people. The whole effect of GDPR on sensitive data, such as post-mortem photographs and portraits, is still unclear. In general, GDPR seems not to concern the deceased (GDPR, recital 27). Also Finland's proposed data protection act does not apply to the personal data of deceased persons.

Open access to photographs raises questions about museums' ambitions, breaches of individual rights and use permissions, along with the question of the proper way to present deceased people on the web or in mass media. The *Personal Data Act 523/1999* and *Copyright Act 404/1961* (amendments up to 608/2015) protect the rights of the person who was photographed or the person who has the copyright to the photograph. The copyright stands for 50 years. Many portraits have no protection as artwork and can be shared more freely after open access. However, permission to publish images is required.

Releasing photographs as open data passes the responsibility from the museum to the user. Publishing an image with abusive content can fulfill the definition of defamation or dissemination of information that violates privacy, although defamation cannot be applied if a considerable amount of time has elapsed since the death of the people in the photograph. In Finland there is also variation in how a museum releases photographs with personal data. Some museums publish portraits only if they are over 100 years old and some are publishing post-mortem photographs with only a little information; in that way the person isn't identifiable.

Helsinki City Museum decided to give open access to most metadata of post-mortem photographs including the person's name, year and sometimes the story behind the death. As mentioned previously, museum policy is to immediately take an online photograph off the web if someone concerned so request.

8. Conclusion

Online information increases all the time. If a museum wishes to influence the public's understanding of history, it can't hide difficult issues such as post-mortem photographs. Before publishing, it is beneficial to discuss thoroughly the pros and cons of the procedure.

By weighing the pros and cons, Helsinki City Museum chose the course of action. Open access to post-mortem photographs brought legitimate questions of legal and ethical issues and some fears among museum staff of Helsinki City Museum. None of the fears have been realized so far. Photographs have been used several times in newspaper articles in an appropriate manner. Journalists have co-operated with the museum's curators and have carefully written about the tradition and context of post-mortem photographs (Turunen 2016, Haapaluoma-Höglund 2017). Newspaper articles on the web have provoked lots of discussion among readers. For example, Haapaluoma-Höglund's article (2017) has nearly 50 comments. Some of the comments are a truly deep analysis of inner feelings inspired by post-mortem photographs. Open post-mortem photographs have also inspired discussion in several Facebook groups concentrated on old photographs (e.g. Tempus Fugit – vanhoja valokuvia) and open photographs have been used in Pinterest and several websites (e.g. Palescarlett 2017; Pinterest). All feedback given to Helsinki City Museum has been positive. We think that the publishing has increased the public discussion of post-mortem photographs as a tradition.

The aim of Helsinki City Museum was not to provoke or make post-mortem photographs more taboo. The aim was to make a hidden part of collection available to everyone. Post-mortem photography is one tradition of photography, which has offered the possibility to remember and cherish the lost ones. It also gives an interesting view to one's life story and to the ways in which death has been a part of the society in the past.

We think that open access to post-mortem photographs might evoke more comfortable thinking about death. But without understanding the deeper historic context of these photographs, it likely will not happen. Open access to post-mortem photographs has been successful process in Helsinki City Museum. We want to encourage picture collections to publish all kinds of photographs – even those sensitive and difficult ones as post-mortem photographs.

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Natalie Meurisch

Conservational challenges in dealing with Holocaust objects

Abstract The article will highlight different aspects of working with Holocaust objects in today's memorials or museums. It will focus on objects which were artistically created from everyday objects in an active camp time and how the intersection between an object as a historic evidence and an object as a work of art or craft might change the way a conservator should approach it. Is it possible to combine functionality, highest authenticity and readability and measure up to the standards of historical and artistic representation? Can art be displayed on the site of a former concentration camp and how will it be comprehended by a visitor? With focus on the storage and exhibition strategies of smaller and larger memorials or museums, the decisions on which objects should be on display and which should not, the different approaches for a conservator in the field of Holocaust objects will be dealt with by using examples from the State Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and the Ravensbrueck Memorial.

Keywords Holocaust objects, memorials, art, concentration camps, conservation

The presentation that was given during the 2017 Helsingborg Conference *Difficult Issues* focused on different aspects of working with Holocaust objects in today's memorials or museums. Having collected different experiences over the past few years, it seems necessary to review why some objects in today's memorials are on display and why others are not, and which difficulties arise with these specific objects. The presentation of this topic and the experiences shared come from a solemnly personal point of view during the work at different museums and memorials.

These memorials and/or museums have different structures and may follow different educational guidelines on how to inform people about the Holocaust. The memorial as a place of remembrance may focus on certain local historical events, a person or a certain group of persecuted individuals. In some cases, memorials will not focus as much on pedagogical transference of historical facts and will only serve as a place, where people come together to find solace and emotional support. A museum usually aims for a more scientific approach into the topic to educate people about a certain historic event or a certain period. There might be a combination of both institutions where a more intertwined approach to the poignant subjectivity of an historical occurrence and the technical transfer of knowledge to the visitor takes place. When it comes to collections and conservation departments, not every memorial has to have one. This usually depends on the size of the memorial, the absence or presence of a collection, the size of the collection, and aids or sponsorships the memorial may or may not benefit from. Larger museums instead are able to afford their own conservation department or may work with outside contractors, especially when there are private funds involved and the size and character of the collections demands a constant conservational care.

Furthermore, it is necessary to highlight the different types of collections and their origins. Dealing with the extremely difficult task of presenting the history of the Holocaust, these museums and/or memorials differ in their pedagogical lectureship and their exhibition strategies. With the representation of the Holocaust, it is possible to have a combination of historic grounds, buildings, artefacts and modern buildings. With this basis, different aspects might contribute to the character of the collections. When referring to a place or location of the Holocaust, which now houses a memorial or museum, the former use of the site might have a great impact on the types of object the institution displays. The Memorial Ravensbrueck was mainly a concentration camp which incarcerated women and deals with the forced

labour situation that took place on-site. Many objects belonged to women and have an obvious feminine character or can be linked to specific production processes (use of cable or wire, for example), made under forced labour. In memorials, everyday objects such as former belongings of concentration camp inmates or artefacts which document the daily routine of the incarcerated women and men and their perpetrators, can often be seen on the historic grounds, sometimes even in historic buildings and surroundings. For visitors these objects are usually easy to identify and understand given the context of the historic place. Museums without the connection to a historic location have to create a proper exhibition environment and context, in which Holocaust artefacts can be presented appropriately and the nature of the objects can be perceived by the viewer, as for example it is the case at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) in Washington DC. There, the same 'category' of objects that can be found as presented in memorials of former concentration camps, though the surrounding had to be designed specifically to fit in these objects. The USHMM had a controversial start in the eye of the public since it started out at a memorial for the six million murdered Jews during the Holocaust. Survivor Elli Wiesel put emphasis on this fact since the elimination of the Jewish people was the original plan of the Nazis but other persecuted groups felt left out. The founding commission was mostly Jewish and today the main part of the exhibition deals with the *Shoa*. In addition to objects from former concentration camps the museum acquired a vast number of archival objects such as papers, letters, posters, photography, all describing the living conditions of Jewish people under repression or the Jewish resistance during World War II. The museum sometimes takes on complete collections or house/apartment clearances after the death of a Holocaust survivor. Usually within these donations there are what someone would refer to as irrelevant objects for a museum but seeing the mission of the museum as to remember and preserve the memento of a Holocaust survivor, Jewish life and culture, the museum might be the last place able to take care of these objects.

In the case of the USHMM we also have a strong focus on genocide prevention – not only the depiction of the past with artefacts and reconstructions but also written, visual and audio-visual exhibition concepts about past and current genocidal threats around the world. Similar approaches may also be seen in smaller memorials, where oral history interviews and reports play a large part of the exhibition concept since the objects collection might be

smaller and maybe deteriorated to the point that exhibition would be a risk for the object itself.

For some memorials or museums, the use of the historic grounds after the liberation had also an influence on current structures. The approach of the State Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau, which was established by survivors of the camp who decided to stay there after the liberation, solemnly focuses on the side of the victims and does not display artefacts which can be associated with the Nazis (uniforms, for example). Additionally, the former grounds and barracks of the State Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau had been occupied by the Soviet Army after the liberation of the camp. Material had been reused, used up or transported to other areas which led to traces around the camp sites that imply a varied, multi-cultural and multi-ethnical history of the place, but which was also not included into the museum and memorial structures.

Memorials of former concentration camps do not only care for a vast number of objects, they also take care of the original buildings and the surrounding landscape. Their priority is highest accuracy in displaying all the aspects of the Holocaust. Due to the shortage of exhibition space in what is often an original building, memorials can only display a certain number of objects of their large collection – leaving the rest in storage. And depending on how the memorial wants to transfer the place's history, sometimes only objects of a certain character, with connection to a certain people or place, are on display.

The presence of a conservation department at memorials and museums is a political and financial aspect, as funding can be in the hands of federal state politics. Many resources are used for the exhibition and historical programmes and how to transfer the sensitive information to the visitor to raise awareness and as part of the memorials task to contribute to genocide prevention. Furthermore, the storage facilities, limited in space and structure especially when they are part of the cultural heritage, are not always ideal for the many different materials and the often fragile states in which they are in. This is especially difficult when it comes to monitoring. Even larger museums with own conservation departments, like the United State Holocaust Memorial Museum, struggle to tend to the objects in a way they would need it. During the move from the museum's building in Washington DC to a new built storage facility in Bowie, Maryland, this became obvious: objects had to be revisited, new condition reports were written, and the objects had to be rehoused for the move. During the revisitation of the plastics collection it

became obvious that especially the early plastics from the 1930s and 40s are in an extremely difficult condition with their plasticizers gassing out and thus being also a risk to the surrounding objects. If transferred to smaller memorials with one storage facility for different materials and sometimes without an air outlet and exchange of air, this situation is a great risk for the collection. It is an extremely difficult task to carry out all these conservational tasks without the proper funding, without the space, the staff and the time.

The conservational approach to research and, in the end, to forming a treatment proposal, as taught at the Cologne Institute of Conservation Sciences, involves an object history and research as detailed as possible. It does not only give all the information needed to attend to the material but in some cases, it might even shed some light on historical and ethical components. When it comes to Holocaust objects, the research includes not only the history of the object and the material, but a broader view on the political and sociological systems from which the Holocaust arose and, if known, personal biographies of the people the object belonged to. It is therefore necessary to have an eye for underlying structures and contextualization. It will make the research process also more emotionally demanding, since it is inevitable to be confronted with graphically written and visualized information.

Art in the context of concentration camps is a difficult topic for memorials. These institutions do not want visitors, especially those who might not be as familiar with the history of the Holocaust, to get the impression that there was – to put it drastically – enough leisure time to follow a hobby like art or crafts and thus trivialize the Holocaust. We can also see objects that once were everyday objects and that have been transformed artistically. Little sculptures that were carved out of toothbrushes, rosaries which were made from chewed bread – materials that could have had an enormous value to an inmate in their original state but were used to create something other instead – highly personal objects, some with religious character, others more playful and intended for children for example, as can be seen at the Ravensbrueck Memorial. Objects with this specific background, objects which were transformed during the active camp time, may be hard to grasp even when displayed at the original site.

A belt, braided out of cable insulation by an inmate of the concentration camp Ravensbrueck points to a woman in need of a belt, maybe to rope up the inmate clothing which was getting too large due to starvation and could have been impractical while working in of the forced labour facilities. It also shows that after stripping down this woman to an animal-like state, with a

number instead of a name, without proper nutrition and the constant fear of death, there is still a woman with a sense of femininity and self-consciousness who decided to create something beautiful even at the risk of being punished for misusing material. Researching this object made it very clear that the task of a conservator does not stop at the material itself, but it also leads to an intersection: how do we comprehend these objects? Are they primarily historical evidence or can we see the art in its transformation? If so: is it possible to combine functionality, authenticity and readability and measure up to the standards of historical and artistic representation? The ethical approach to conservational treatments of Holocaust objects is usually predetermined by the museum's or the memorial's directory or board of directory. With the fragile, sometimes inferior, reused material, the limits of possible treatments are already given although they might not coincide with the personal wish of treatment that forms during the examination – especially with objects that demand the certain kind of respect due to the circumstances of their creation. A disentanglement from the commonly used categories of 'art', 'craft' or 'historic evidence' seems as a way to open up to the possibility that there are objects and object categories which just do not seem to fit in these restrictions and are in need and deserving of a more specific and personal conservational approach.

Birgitta Witting

The weekend when violence took over – on documenting a memorial site

Abstract In this chapter, I will start by describing the course of events during two violent days in Helsingborg when the football clubs Djurgårdens IF (from Stockholm) and Helsingborgs IF (HIF) met for the season's first match in the Allsvenskan football league in March 2014. One man died, in addition to several cases of assault and vandalism. A remembrance place soon formed on the site where he was killed, with scarves, team jerseys and candles. The day after the match, the HIF supporter club Kärnan organised a manifestation against violence, which was attended by several thousands. At Kulturmagasinet, we realised that we needed to do something, document and collect material, but this involved considerable problems. The second part of this article describes our staff's thoughts, discussions and practical experiences.

Keywords football violence, collective grief, memorial

Introduction

Kulturmagasinet is a municipal institution belonging to Helsingborgs museer (Museums of Helsingborg), with a staff of some 20 people engaged in acquiring and managing Helsingborg's collections, documentation of cultural heritage and public art. Kulturmagasinet is also responsible for the mediaeval castle tower Kärnan.

Kulturmagasinet's assignment includes producing at least one major planned contemporary documentation each year. The violence in connection with the season's first Allsvenskan match in 2014 alerted us to the need for being prepared to document unforeseen, extraordinary events.

A besieged city

On Sunday, 30 March 2014, the local football team HIF and the football team Djurgården from Stockholm met for the first Swedish match of the year, but what could have been a football party ended in tragedy. This article gives an insight into what happened in Helsingborg, and how the staff at Kulturmagasinet documented the memorial place that emerged.

On Saturday, 29 March, the away fans began to arrive, and they were many, around 4,000. By Saturday night, the scene had become chaotic, with several cases of aggravated assault and rioting. In the centre of Helsingborg, dozens of Djurgården fans stormed the tavern The Headless Swan in search of HIF supporters: "Now Helsingborg you bastards we will kill you," the attackers shouted. They assaulted the supporters with chairs and bottles. Tavern owner Michel Cavalli told the newspaper *Helsingborgs Dagblad* (Rasmusson 2014) the day after:

> They were everywhere and smashing everyone and everything. The worst was what happened on the sofa at the back. Two girls in their 20s sat there bleeding heavily from their faces. They had been hit by bottles, glasses and chairs that the guys threw at them. The father of one of the girls was in the place, and he covered his daughter with his own body to protect her.

A few days after the incident, the local newspaper published (Andersson 2014) an appeal to its readers on the internet to submit their stories to the newspaper, so it could get an overview of the chaos. On a map of

Helsingborg, the public could click between different memories. The title of my article and some of the quotes are borrowed from there.

Several people who were at the bar Bara Rock around 11pm witnessed how two or three male Djurgården supporters were assaulted by several people. Charlotta, from Helsingborg, recalls (Andersson 2014):

> One of the Djurgården fans is attacked and thrown head first through one of the windows at Bara Rock then lies on the ground and is kicked in the head, back and stomach. When the HIF hooligans spots one of the other Djurgårders running away, they chase after him and beat him up just outside Restaurant Viking. We help the first one get up and wash his wounds, and then we take him to Viking to his friend who got beaten up.

The chaos continued all night, with several cases of assault, and the police did not consider order to have been restored to the normal weekend level until 3am. No mention was made of cancelling the match at the security meeting the following day. On the Sunday before the match, some supporters attempted to clash with each other. Two eye witnesses wrote (ibid. 2014):

> Suddenly the HIFers began shouting outside Helsing. 'They're coming! They're coming!' I went outside and saw a group of 60–70 Djurgården troublemakers moving towards us through the main square. I felt there were far too few police officers around.

> Seconds later, other HIFers notice some 150 Djurgården supporters approaching quickly from St Mary's Church. The police have no track of this despite the helicopter in the air, and HIFers are screaming at the top of their lungs to get police attention. The Djurgårdeners manage to get all the way up to the bar Helsing and people are literally running into the restaurant for fear. I don't usually feel afraid or insecure in similar situations but the absence of police was scary at this point.

It was finally time for the supporters to march on to the Olympia football stadium. A 43-year-old Djurgården supporter and his group chose to take a different route, via the stairs up to Kärnan, the tower of Helsingborg. On the stairs he met a 28-year-old man, an inveterate HIFer who punched the 43-year-old man, which caused his dead.

On the north stand at the Olympia, the fans' mobile phones started ringing and pinging. The news of the death spread and the atmosphere soon grew aggressive.

Outside the stadium, you could hear Djurgården fans shouting "Murderer, murderer, murderer". The match was stopped when supporters stormed the football pitch. The situation was chaotic and full of fear. Roger, who was trying to make his way home, recalls: "As they rushed towards us, lots of people, families and others who had run to the west, stood desperately pulling at the doors and bars because they wanted to get in and take shelter, they were terrified." One of the attackers targeted him because he was wearing a HIF scarf and hit him over the head. "When I met his gaze, it felt like he just wanted to kill me." And "We were hunted by 10–15 masked Djurgården supporters as we walked away from the Olympia. They shouted 'You will all die' and chased us with iron bars. People ran over cars and right out into the traffic. They fled for their lives," remembers Miriam (ibid. 2014).

The memorial site

Immediately after the incident leading to the death of the 43-year-old, a memorial site began to emerge. Club scarves, jerseys, candles, messages and flowers were placed in a circle on the ground. The same evening, HIF's supporter club Kärnan organised a manifestation against football violence, gathering thousands of people. This was a manifestation for the person who had lost his life, but also for the entire incident: the violence at The Headless Swan, and the supporters' march to the stadium. People felt that their city was under siege and no one dared go outside. The Helsingborgers wanted to reclaim their city. "We are the good force. And together we are saying that we've had enough!", said Martin Nilsson, president of the Kärnan supporter club (Helsingborgs Dagblad 2014, 23:30 min). HIF president Claes Olsson spoke about the assault against the sport, about the tougher attitude at football matches, the lack of respect for others, and that society had to stand united to make football a positive force and experience (ibid, 25:14 min). Therese Kruse, Head of Department at Kulturmagasinet, attended the manifestation:

> When I arrive at Terrasstrapporna just before seven, the memorial site is crowded. People are standing along the banisters on both sides of the stairs, and people on their way to Stortorget, the meeting place for the manifestation.

Fig. 1: The memorial at the Terrace stairs in Helsingborg

Fig. 2: Wet paper material where placed between acid-free blotting paper to dry.
Photos (2): Sven-Olof Larsén © Kulturmagasinet, 2014

> The memorial site has grown so you can hardly get around it, the space is very cramped. People have stopped in the stairs, so it's impossible for me to get down to Stortorget, which is packed with people, probably thousands. A lot of teenagers, but also adults, kids and families with buggies are present.
>
> In the middle stairs, people with torches are standing, and then the Kärnan supporter club president starts the manifestation with a speech, followed by the HIF club president. Then a minute's silence for the Djurgården supporter who died, and it's a powerful sensation when thousands of people stand silently.
>
> Everyone on Stortorget is instructed to go up the stairs and pass the memorial site to pay tribute to the dead man and lay down offerings or flowers. It gets crowded and progress up the stairs is slow, but the memorial grows, with more scarves, banners, flowers and candles from many different sport clubs. 20 minutes later, the line to the memorial is still long. Many people stay behind along the railings after climbing the stairs, to watch the memorial and how it is growing (fig. 1, p. 60).

The collection

At Kulturmagasinet, we realised that this was an incident that should be preserved and documented. We believed it was important to preserve the memory of the incident where so many took a stand against violence. Our documentation efforts would engage a large number of staff in various ways, so we met with all kinds of professionals: directors, antiquarians, conservators, warehouse personnel and a photographer, to discuss how to proceed. How should the documentation be performed, and what should the collection include? Since we were all emotionally affected, the discussion mainly concerned the ethical issues, on which opinions differed. Some thought it was enough to take pictures and asked what right we had to take the objects. They signified people's private feelings. Another asked if we should document thoroughly and record how many scarves were laid at the memorial site and the names of all the clubs that were represented. Would we take in everything? If not, how would we choose?

A decision was made that we would collect parts of the memorial site. It was not possible to collect everything. Kulturmagasinet's photographer, Sven-Olof Larsén had already begun documenting the site photographically.

But there weren't just emotional issues, there was also the time factor. It was the city's executive management that decided how long the memorial

should remain. We set up a plan so that a curator and a conservator would be on call when the time came. Later, we also realised that there were not only ethical, but also practical, temporal and material issues (fig. 2, p. 60).

On Wednesday, 9 April, the city administration notified us that the objects would be removed the following day. On behalf of the city, the buildings and parks company Peab would be in charge of gathering, and four staff members from Kulturmagasinet were on site to monitor and assist the project. The process took just over two hours and was conducted partly in heavy rain. All the gifts were soaked, some were very soiled, and the floral tributes were beginning to disintegrate. We were also under time pressure. Peab had other assignments waiting.

Kulturmagasinet's painting conservator, Christina Gräbe, worked in one of the niches on the north-facing side of the stone wall around the memorial site, which offered some overhead protection. There was also a bench for the packaging materials she had brought, which she also used as a wrapping table. Christina focused mainly on the paper objects, such as drawings, notes, match tickets and letters. Here is her account:

> Everything was soaking wet. The paper objects that had got wet were fragile and tore easily. Parts of the writing and drawings had bled, dissolved or disappeared completely. A large part of the material was dirty after being outside on the ground. A rough sorting was performed on site. Anything that was legible was selected and saved. The paper material was placed between acid-free blotting paper and put in boxes between cardboard sheets and dispatched to Peab's premises for storing and drying. It struck us that many of the messages said: THAT'S ENOUGH!

Kulturmagasinet's antiquarian, Pelle Johansson, was also on site:

> All objects were placed in pallet rims and lifted onto lorries to be dispatched to Peab's warehouse, where everybody helped to hang the textile objects to dry. The immediate impression was the width and diversity of gifts from supporters, practically every Swedish team scarf was represented. Many souvenirs from teams in other leagues and countries had also been placed on the site. Obviously, objects from HIF and Djurgården were the most common by far. There were more than 600 scarves, and hundreds of flowers and bouquets. Votive candles and lanterns were well-represented, some with lines of text. A few of the match jerseys had been inscribed with marker pens.

Newspaper articles, especially from *Helsingborgs Dagblad*, were collected continuously from 31 March to the first anniversary and have now been copied on archive paper and are searchable in Kulturmagasinet's archive.

Post-processing

To prevent damage from vermin, all the material first had to pass through Kulturmagasinet's 12 cubic metre freezer upon arrival. The freezer rapidly lowers the temperature to -35°C and keeps it there for seven days, before a slow thaw over three days.

This was followed by the process of registering 223 objects and 175 documentary photos in the Museum's database Carlotta. Out of respect for the relatives, we postponed publication until one year after the incident. No reactions reached us after publication.

The objects were inspected by Kulturmagasinet's conservator before being put in storage. Many of the materials are hard to preserve: laminated messages, votive candles with stickers, bottles of alcohol. Another example is the installation with a paper carrier bag filled with pebbles. Among the pebbles is a battery-operated string of fairy lights and a post-it note with the text "You are not alone, Stefan" (several of the objects are marked with the name of the deceased, Stefan, and his nickname 'Myggan'). The whole installation, in turn, is in a plastic bag marked with a DIF club emblem. After the objects had been labelled for the collection, we prioritised photographing this type of item, so that they are documented when the objects themselves eventually disintegrate.

Difficulties

When something violent happens, people often spontaneously create a memorial where they can gather to show sympathy and process their feelings. The material created is usually non-durable and perishes quickly. Therefore, museums have to move quickly and get there as fast as possible. But collecting is associated with problems relating to materials, the time factor, feelings and, not least, ethics. When Kulturmagasinet discussed collecting the memorial in Helsingborg, one staff member asked whether we had the right to take the objects, raising the issue of leaving the dead to rest in peace. In her essay *Yvs icke, Död* (Death, be not Proud), Kerstin Vinterhed (2005, 5)

also writes that new "holy places" arise around the scenes of accidents. She is referring to the *Estonia* shipwreck, the Gothenburg fire, the death of Princess Diana, events that have generated strong popular involvement. ICOM's ethical rules for museums (ICOM 2005) do not state any directives for objects of the above nature, but they could be likened to religious artefacts (articles 2.5, 3.7 and 4.3).

For Kulturmagasinet, the temporal problems included not being able to decide when the material should be gathered, and that our staff had to put their other tasks to one side. In many cases, it is crucial to act instantly; in others, we need to wait. It can be too painful to approach the task immediately. But people often have a strong need to share directly after an incident. The map of Helsingborg, where people could contribute their accounts of the chaotic weekend in 2014, is an example of that.

Another temporal aspect concerns the question of how and what to prioritise in the sometimes complicated and time-consuming processing of objects. The longer they are left, the greater the risk of forfeiting part of their context. Kulturmagasinet continuously gathered press cuttings, which has been valuable in various situations when trying to reconstruct the course of events. In future, these cuttings will also complement the objects by making it easy to achieve a day-by-day timeline.

This type of collecting also has its material-related problems: the objects can be damaged by weather conditions, dirt, moisture and rust. When we unpacked the textiles from the Helsingborg memorial at Kulturmagasinet, they had started to mould and had to be attended to by a textile conservator. It remains to be seen how long it will take before the plastic items from this site start to stick together, texts in magic marker fade and stickers on votive candles fall off.

In addition to the above, there is also the emotional aspect. Events such as those described in this article affect us on a personal level, no matter how professional we are. It is not always easy to remain objective. Perhaps we ourselves have been personally affected by the events.

Museum staff engaged in difficult subjects often have many other tasks alongside, and it can be hard going straight from an interview where they have listened to a tragic life story, or from an emotionally taxing situation, back to their usual work. Moreover, many work alone and might not have anyone to vent their experiences with.

The City provides staff at Kulturmagasinet with professional counselling if they feel the need. In the case of the memorial, however, we coped by

talking to each other. It was incredibly important that everyone who would be affected by the material and the collecting could meet and discuss.

Conclusion

The eve of Sunday, 30 March 2014, and the day after were chaotic for Helsingborg, and the staff at Kulturmagasinet who met at work on 31 March were all deeply affected. By the time the memorial site emerged and the manifestation had been held, we had already realised that we needed to act. In the moment, everything felt stressful and upsetting, but in hindsight we see the advantages of how we handled the situation; we were on site quickly and started our photographic documentation early on, we met to share our thoughts, both as professionals and on a personal level. Last but not least, we were all prepared to be flexible, to help each other and to cooperate.

So, how can we prepare for the unforeseen? In the same way that we prepare for incidents such as fires, we can be ready to act on unexpected events, for instance by having portable tables and temporary canopies at hand in our workplaces. But more importantly: we need a willingness to cooperate, to have an open climate, to dare discuss difficult subjects, and, in an instance, put our busy schedules to one side.

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Áile Aikio

Guovtti ilmmi gaskkas. Balancing between two contested worlds.

The challenges and benefits of being an indigenous museum professional

Abtract In this paper, I will discuss the encounters of being an indigenous museum professional and the challenges and benefits I have faced when balancing between two contested worlds. The idea of museum bases on European worldview and outlook. For indigenous peoples, this means the role of the other. As a part of the colonial system, museums had a role in suppressing and assimilating indigenous cultures. Museums still manage indigenous heritage and represent indigenous people's culture as passive and inferior in exhibitions and publications. Still, the indigenous communities see museums as a possibility to present their story to themselves and the others. The role reserved for the Sámi people in museums has been a study object or a resource for knowledge and research material. The discussion what would be the Sámi way to work in a museum has just started.

Being an indigenous museum professional working with your own culture has many advantages. Communication with your own people is easy; you share a common language and cultural background. You also have the authority and the knowledge to evaluate the knowledge shared with you. This provides you with a special insight but is also the greatest challenge. As a Sámi you always represent a certain family, which strongly effect on how people interact with you. Indigenous professionals can help to build understanding and collaboration. I see my work as a mediator in the process of indigenizing museums so that our museums would exist for our indigenous community. Museums could give new experiences to the indigenous community, be a benefit and even heal traumas caused by colonization.

Keywords indigenous peoples, indigenous museum, the Sámi, fourth world, kinships

Introduction

In this paper, I have taken the Sámi understanding of the world, that there are parallel worlds and you can move between them, as my epistemological starting point. I transfer this understanding from its original spiritual context to museum context. I will discuss the encounters and collisions I have encountered being an indigenous museum professional and the challenges and benefits I have faced when balancing between two contested worlds, the indigenous Sámi world and the western world of museums.

The title of my paper is *Guovtti ilmmi gaskkas. Balancing between two contested worlds. The challenges and benefits of being an indigenous museum professional*. The first words are in Northern Sámi[1], as in all my titles. Northern Sámi is a small indigenous language, one of the ten Sámi languages, and my mother tongue. Translated to English the words would be 'between two worlds' or 'between two realities'[2]. In traditional Sámi context, the phrase is most often used figuratively; describe reality[3] or somebody losing sense of reality[4], to describe person's state of mind[5] and even religious trance[6].

The phrase 'to be between two worlds' also describes the position of the indigenous in the world today, that is dominated by non-indigenous culture. For the indigenous peoples it is a fact that two or even more worlds exist, both literally and metaphorically. One set of these parallel realities consists of the dominant world of the non-indigenous and the indigenous world. The differences across these two worlds are vast, encompassing differences in language, worldview, values, ways to interact and behave, only to mentions some. It is not possible to walk in both worlds without balancing. We indigenous individuals, as well as indigenous communities, must choose, prioritize and make compromises to keep our culture alive. Because of their dominant position of

1 Sámi is also spelled Saami and Sami in English. In this paper, I follow the Northern Sámi spelling of the word. The Sami have historically been known in English as the Lapps or the Laplanders, but these terms are perceived as derogatory.

2 To be part of two worlds is a phenome known throughout indigenous world and phrases to describe this state are known among many indigenous peoples. A frequently used metaphor in English is 'walk in two worlds' (see Henze and Vanett 1993).

3 *dán ilmmis* (in this world/reality)

4 *guovtti ilmmmi gaskii saddat* (lose sense of reality)

5 As in sentence *eadni lea guovtti ilmmi gaskkas* (mother is not herself or mother is not totally awake)

6 *duon ilmmis* (in spirit world)

western majority culture, the non-indigenous have the possibility to live only in one world and ignore other worlds. For the non-indigenous majority, the indigenous world is often invisible. This option is open for indigenous individuals only by abandoning indigenous heritage. For the indigenous peoples the status of the majority culture, the forced assimilation and adaptation to the majority culture means that the indigenous individuals have no choice but to walk in at least two worlds if they want to keep their indigenous heritage.

Museum is based on western understanding and built for the non-indigenous world. Its methodologies, practices and values are western, and they may conflict in many ways with their indigenous counterparts. Does this mean, that to be able to work in museum, to live in the world of museum, the indigenous museum professionals must abandon their own heritage or compromise their indigenous values in for example concerning ancestral remains or open access of knowledge?

I will start my paper by describing shortly who are the Sámi and what is the situation of the Sámi in Finland. Secondly, I will discuss what is a museum or rather what is the museum institution seen from the indigenous Sámi perspective and what is an indigenous museum. Thirdly, I will present two examples, the understanding of cultural environment and the position of museum professional in indigenous context, where I have experienced and observed indigenous and museum world colliding, conflicting understandings that might affect work in museum. With my examples my aim is to highlight the indigenous understanding and demonstrate how invisible indigenous world may be for the non-indigenous. For most of the non-indigenous indigenous world is unknown and unseen, the conflicts and collisions that can affect to the collaboration with indigenous communities can be unnoticed.

Sápmi and the Sámis

The Sámi are the indigenous population to Sápmi, land of the Sámi. Today Sápmi is divided with borders between Finland, Norway and Sweden and the Russian Federation. The Sámi are the only indigenous people[7] in the European Union. The total Sámi population is estimated to be 75,000 to 100,000, with the majority living in Norway. In Finland there are about 10,000 Sámi. In Finland the Sámi have cultural self-determination, ergo the right to maintain and develop their own language, culture and traditional livelihoods. The indigenous status of the Sámi was written into the Finnish constitution in 1995.

Altogether, there are ten Sámi languages and three of them, Northern Sámi, Inari Sámi and Skolt Sámi, are spoken in Finland. All the Sámi languages are severely or critically endangered with substantial number of speakers but practically no children among them (UNESCO 2011). In Finland approximately 2,000 Sámi have Northern Sámi as their mother tongue and the two other Sámi languages have approximately 300 speakers each. Because of the assimilation policies many Sámi have lost their ability to speak their language and most of the Sámi do not know their mother tongue.

Museum and the indigenous peoples

The Europeans created the idea of museum in Europe and it is based on European worldview and outlook. As most of the European institutions, also museum is part of the colonial structure. Museums had a role when European national states built their national identity and in museums the colonial powers exhibited the treasures claimed from the colonies. Museum is involved in the colonial oppression, assimilation and cultural genocide of the indigenous peoples. In addition, museum collections, exhibitions and the research done in the museum produces and strengthens the colonial, stereotypical imagery of indigenous cultures and transmits the colonial worldview further to next generations. The colonial knowledge produced in museum about indigenous peoples is used to validate European colonialism and hegemony over the indigenous peoples as natural, inevitable and legitimate. As Norwegian scholar Silje Opdahl Mathisen (2017, 60) recapitalizes: "European museums contributed to a stereotypical view of other cultures, including the Sámi, where conceptions of race, mentality and culture were essentialized and this ultimately served to legitimize Western hegemony."

In an institution that is based on European worldview and colonial interests in such a way as museum, the role for indigenous peoples is the role of the other, something that is different from the Europeans. In museum exhibitions and publications indigenous peoples are presented passive and inferior

7 Peoples in independent countries are regarded as indigenous if they are descended from the populations which inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonisation or the establishment of present state boundaries and if they identify themselves as indigenous and retain, irrespective of their legal status, some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions (www.samediggi.fi/sami-info/?lang=en).

to western cultures, even as a presentation what Europeans used to be in the past, in the earlier stage of cultural evolution. Indigenous peoples do not represent themselves in museum, but they are used as a comparison to European culture, what Europeans are not. As Ivan Karp (1991, 15) writes:

> Exhibitions represent identity, either directly, through assertion, or indirectly, by implication. When cultural "others" are implicated, exhibitions tell us who we are and, perhaps most significant, who we are not. Exhibitions are privileged arenas for presenting images of self and "other".

Museum's cooperation with the indigenous communities has mostly been collecting information from the community and about the culture through individual indigenous informants. The starting point for the collaboration is most often the needs and the interests of the museum or the museum worker and in the end of the collaboration the ownership to the material collected is transferred to the museum. The indigenous peoples serve as a source and resource for knowledge and research material for the non-indigenous institution. Further, the interpretation and representation of the indigenous cultures is done in museum without indigenous involvement, highlighting the role of the indigenous communities and individual as research material instead of equal collaborators.

Examples of this practice can be found in all the museums and in their collections, catalogues, exhibitions and publications, where the name and the role of the collector, museum professional or researcher is emphasized, and the identities of the indigenous informants are faded out if recorded at all. This practice is often defended as a necessity to protect the privacy of the informants, but it can be also interpreted as conscious or unconscious distain of the indigenous understanding and ownership of indigenous intangible cultural heritage. In addition, the original research material produced in indigenous language is most often translated, interpreted and published in a language and form that is not understood by the indigenous informants. Hereby, the indigenous are blocked from their own heritage collected in museum, as well as they are blocked from revising the information about them and their heritage in museum and misunderstandings and wrong interpretations done by the outsiders might live on in museum undisturbed. As museum is regarded as guardian as facts, these misunderstandings can be hard or even impossible for the indigenous to correct. All in all, the indigenous peoples are not involved throughout the process of information provided in museum or for

example how their culture is exhibited in museum exhibitions. The misinterpretations of indigenous cultures or their heritage may have harmful implications for attitudes towards the indigenous or for the position and rights of the indigenous living today.

All things considered, the ultimate dilemma is, that in the non-indigenous museum the interests of the indigenous peoples are not equally regarded, and the languages and cultural practices of the indigenous communities are not taken in consideration even-handedly if at all. The excluding of indigenous knowledge, language and methodology, as described by Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012), is part of the colonial structure in museum and the underlying issue to untangle when building a more equal relationship, collaboration and future between the indigenous and non-indigenous museum. Decolonization in indigenous context is to analyse and map colonialism, to discover its different forms and implications, but also to break free from colonial structures, governance, practices and discourses that sustain the colonial power. The inclusion of the indigenous in museum is the precondition for the decolonization as well as the first step in the indigenization of museum. To indigenize is to transform for example an institution to suit the culture, worldview and values of the indigenous. Indigenization of museum (Phillips 2011) is about incorporating indigenous worldviews, knowledge and perspectives into the museum and respect them as equal to other views. To accomplish this task, we need museum professionals with sufficient language skills in indigenous languages, as language is the key to interpret the culture concerned, as well as museum professional, that are experienced to work in multicultural contexts. To involve indigenous museum professional in this process, seems to be liable solution.

The implications of the dishonest museum practices of the past, as plundering of ancestral remains, the wrongful purchases of tangible heritage or for example to collect information with help of serving alcohol, are still present in indigenous life and they still have an impact on the relationship and collaboration between museums and indigenous communities. The remains of our ancestors are still stored in museums. Our tangible and intangible heritage is still defined and governed by the laws of national states and the protection of our sacred sites depends on whether they are seen sacred enough by outside experts. The protection of indigenous heritage depends on how well it fits the western description of heritage and western understanding what is valuable and culturally significant enough to be protected.

The common denominator for these unsolved collisions between indigenous and non-indigenous is the unequal position of indigenous understandings,

knowledge and methodologies compared to non-indigenous practices and philosophies. The Sámi scholar, Professor Rauna Kuokkanen (2007, 253) states: "Indigenous peoples and their worldviews, values, histories and conceptions of knowledge have been systematically excluded from western epistemologies and intellectual inquiries." The excluding of indigenous knowledge is part of the colonial structure in museum and the underlying issue to untangle when building a more equal relationship, collaboration and future between the indigenous and non-indigenous museum worlds.

Indigenous museum and Sámi museums

Despite the dark history of museum, indigenous peoples worldwide have decided to start their own museums. Indigenous communities have adopted the established museum concept and use it to present their own story to themselves and to the others. The idea of indigenous museum, based on values, worldviews and needs of the indigenous communities, is a new addition to the museum concept and is a still ongoing process.

Anthropologist Patricia Erikson has pondered the question why the indigenous peoples are interested to establish their own museums, even though museum is part of the colonial structure. According to Erikson, museums offer an opportunity for indigenous peoples to represent themselves and use these self-representations to disrupt stereotypes through a media that is globally respected as a knowledge making institution. Erikson argues, that because in western societies museums are given the authority to establish truth, beauty and history, museums are ideal places for these disruptions to take place and for critical consciousness to emerge (Erikson 2002, 17; 27).

As other indigenous peoples, also the Sámi have established own cultural institutions, among them Sámi museums. Norway has the largest Sámi population and also the largest number of Sámi museums, altogether thirteen[8]. The Sámi museums are spread to cover most of the Sápmi in Norway, from South Sámi museum in *Snåase* (Snåse) to Ä´vv Skolt Sámi museum in *Njauddâm* (Neiden) close to the Russian border in Northern Norway. In Sweden the Sámi museum activity has been centralized to one Sámi museum, to Ájtte Duottar- ja sámemusea in *Jåhkåmåhkke* (Jokkmokk).

The Sámi Museum Siida is the only Sámi museum in Finland. The main premises of Sámi Museum Siida and the collections, administration and exhibitions are located at the Siida-building in Anár (Inari). When founded by

the Sámi association *Sámii Litto* (Sámi Union) in 1958, the Sámi Museum Siida (at the time called *Inarin Saamelaismuseo*, the Inari Sámi Museum) was the first Sámi governed museum in the world. The first decades the Sámi Museum Siida served as open-air museum and the museum had no storage rooms, but the collections were on display year-round in the unheated open-air museum buildings. The example for the Sámi open-air museum were the Nordic national open-air museums *Skansen* (founded in 1891) in Stockholm and *Seurasaari* (founded in 1909) in Helsinki to exhibit the national culture of the country. In 1998, the modern museum building Siida was opened to public and refined the Sámi open-air museum to a modern, professional museum. The Sámi Museum Siida is owned by a private foundation (*Sámemuseavuođđudus*, the Sámi Museum Foundation) and most of the financing comes from the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture.

In last 20 years, Sámi Museum Siida has stabilized its position as acknowledged part in the Sámi society and has become a respected operator in the Finnish museum field. Today Sámi Museum Siida is the National Museum of the Finnish Sámi and one of the 16 National Special Museums in Finland, with responsibility to acquire, conserve, research, communicate and exhibit the tangible and intangible heritage of the Sámi in Finland. Furthermore, Sámi Museum Siida is one of the most important Sámi organizations in Finland realizing Sámi self-government as prescribed in the Finnish constitution among *Sámediggi* (Sámi Parliament), *Sámi Oahpahusguovddáš* (Sámi Educational Centre) and *Yle Sápmi* (Sámi Radio).

The right to self-representation has been an important part of the Sámi ethno-political struggle and cultural awakening. According to the Sámi scholars, Professor Veli-Pekka Lehtola and the Senior Lecturer Anni-Siiri Länsman state that the Sámi started a Sámi ethno-political movement after Second World War to fight for Sámi rights. In the movement the Sámi built a shared, collective Sámi identity and a new Sámi representation, that were used in Sámi politics but also in general in the struggle for Sámi rights. This ethno-political Sámi nation building process created a Sámi self-reflection to oppose the Sámi representations that had positioned the Sámi people in a subjugated and marginalized position. These representations were made by non-indigenous majority and presented for example in museums (Lehtola and Länsman 2012,

8 In alphabetical order: Árran, Davi álbmogiid dálážiid musea, Deanu Musea, Gállogieddi, Guovdageainnu gilišillju, Jáhkovuona mearrasámi musea, Porsáŋggu musea, Saviomusea, Saemien Sijte, Sámiid Vuorká-Dávvirat, Várdobaiki, Várjjat Sámi Musea, Ä´vv Saa´mi Mu´zei

13; 16). Part of the process for self-representations was to found Sámi institutions. In the struggle to keep their culture alive, the Sámi established museums to preserve the Sámi heritage, to make Sámi culture more visible and to strengthen Sámi identity. The Sámi used museum and museum exhibitions to make the new Sámi based concepts visible and known.

The opportunity for the Sámi to reach any higher education has opened first in the latter half of the 20th century and the history of academic Sámi museum professionals is even younger than the Sámi museum. Even today there is only a handful of Sámi and/or Sámi speaking academic museum professionals in Finland and the situation is only slightly better in Norway and Sweden. I have worked in the Sámi Museum Siida since 2005, first in collections and since 2016 as curator for exhibitions. As well as I was the first Sámi and Sámi speaking museum professional in the Sámi Museum Siida and in Finland. The situation is slowly improving and in 2017, Sámi Museum Siida employs four academic museum professionals, where of three are Sámi.

As indigenous museum, also indigenous museum work is a young idea and the number of indigenous museum professionals is small. To have Sámi museum professionals opens the possibility to introduce to the museum world the Sámi culture, practices, worldview and language in a new scale. The Sámi museum as institution in Finland today is quite stable and there are resources, time, educated personal and competence to start implement Sáminess to the colonial institution museum. We, the Sámi, are still in the beginning of the discussion of decolonization and indigenization as well as what is a Sámi museum and how to leave behind museum's colonial legacy and museum practices that have undervalued Sámi knowledge, values and perspectives. Earlier, in most of the cases, non-indigenous museum methodologies and policies have been transferred to Sámi museum context directly, as that has been the only known way to work in a museum. For example, collection catalogues in the Sámi Museum Siida are in Finnish instead of Sámi language and intangible and tangible heritage, for example handicraft objects and handicraft skills or cultural environments and Sámi traditional music connected to a certain area, are seen disconnected and segregated to different institutions against the Sámi holistic understanding of cultural heritage.

First now there is time and resources start to evaluate what is the Sámi way to do museum work. I state, that in collaboration with the Sámi community, the Sámi museums must combine the museum institution and the Sámi practices, needs and values, to regenerate museum to work for the Sámi and to fulfil the needs of the Sámi. We must ponder what we can keep from

the European museum tradition, what can we learn from the museums and museum policies of the other indigenous peoples and what we must create by ourselves, based on Sámi culture.

Defining cultural environment, collision between indigenous and non-indigenous understandings

A good example of collisions of indigenous and non-indigenous understandings is the definition of cultural environment. Cultural environment is a term that describes the various forms of culture born out of interaction between humans and the natural environment and the phases it has gone through during the ages (Magga 2013, 246). The concept of a Sámi cultural environment was first introduced by Sámi archaeologist Audhild Schanche (2002). According to Schanche, the Sámi cultural environment is the Sámi way to see and experience landscape and environment. Sámi cultural environment is connected to Sámi worldview, customs, livelihoods and traditions and it is in between the two western concepts cultural environment and natural environment (ibid., 157–159). Later, the Sámi researcher Päivi Magga has studied the concept Sámi cultural landscape. According to her a central value in the Sámi culture and worldview is to leave as few traces to the environment as possible. Therefore, for an outsider who emphasizes a cultural landscape as something modified by humans, the land of the Sámi may seem like a desolated natural view, a wilderness, without visible signs of human activity (Magga 2013, 246). According to Magga (ibid.) the Sámi cultural environment is a comprehensive entity,

> including the landscape itself, the people and their trades and social networks, as well as the language used to talk about it, and to distribute information, experiences and feelings. Even the senses are present: the landscape smells, sounds, and feels different according to what time of year it is. To the Sámi, the world is a history book which speaks continuously of the events of the past. Holiness and divinity are also present in the world.

The Sámi cultural environment Magga describes has several layers. The first layer consists of the archaeological remains, the remains of the lives of our ancestors, for example dwelling sites dating to prehistoric to historic times. The second layer consists of built environments, the remains of the generations before us, as buildings, roads or for example reindeer round up corrals.

In addition to these tangible layers of cultural landscape there is also layer of immaterial and intangible heritage, what Magga calls spiritual landscape. This spiritual landscape consists of stories, memories, myths, toponyms and yoicks related to the places as well as traditional knowledge as the knowledge where to pick berries and where to cut hay for your shoes (Magga 2013, 11–13). It is the oral traditions, traditional knowledge and lore connected to the landscape, that give the Sámi cultural environment its meaning.

Sámi cultural environment may be invisible even for an expert of cultural environments or museum professional working with Sámi heritage, if the person does not know the Sámi language. Therefore, the Sámi cultural environments are often not recognized or acknowledged as cultural environments as understood in non-Sámi definition. How we define what is cultural heritage and what is nature, as well what is the relation between tangible and intangible cultural heritage affects our possibilities to preserve, collect and study indigenous heritage equally to non-indigenous heritage. Thus, a significant part of Sámi cultural heritage is unequally mapped and too often left without protection and the Sámi heritage becomes underrepresented in museum, as well in collections as in exhibitions and research.

Conflicting understandings, the kinship in the Sámi community

"*Go sápmelaš muitala iežas birra, de dábálaččat dállan dadjá man sohkii gullá ovdalgo muitala namas ja makkár virgi lea. Norgalaš muitala namas ja makkár virgi lea.*" (When presenting her/himself, a Sámi usually tells first to which families (s)he belongs to, the name or occupation. A Norwegian tells her/his name and work position)[9] (Solbakk and Solbakk 2005, 43). By his slightly generalized example, the Sámi scholar and cultural expert Aage Solbakk describes in the fundamental difference between indigenous and non-indigenous understanding of family and its importance to one's position. For the Sámi the family connection is most important, it positions a person to the network of kinships the Sámi society is built on. Sámi affiliations, the relationships, families and kinships inside Sámi community, are an example how indigenous and non-indigenous worlds and worldviews can differ. Connections, relationships and the underlying networks of an indigenous society can be hard to notice for an outsider and even invisible for a non-Sámi.

9 Translation from Northern Sámi by the author

My Sámi name is Luobbal-Sámmol-Aimo Áile. It is a patronym consisting of my father's and grandfather's names and of the name of the place my family comes from *Mierašluoppal*. In addition to my professional identity as a museum curator in a Sámi museum, I am a Sámi woman, doctoral student, mother of three daughters, spouse of a reindeer herder and a *duojár*, traditional Sámi handcrafter. By my grandmother's side, I am part of the family *Helander* from the river valley *Deatnu* (Teno/Tana) and by my grandfather I am a *Vulleš*, member of one of the biggest Sámi families from the river valley *Ohcejohka* (Utsjoki). My mother is Finnish and non-indigenous and almost half of my life I have lived outside Sápmi, in Finnish majority society. Because of my spouse and children, I am connected to the big reindeer herding Sámi families. Northern Sámi is my mother tongue, but I speak a different dialect than my family, because I grew up in *Guovdageaidnu* (Kautokeino), Norway. My multi-ethnic background and the fact that I am river valley Sámi from *Ohcejohka* married to a reindeer herding family in Anár (Inari) forces me to understand that there is always at least two ways to say, understand and value things.

I have worked in the Sámi Museum Siida as curator since 2005, first in collections and since 2016 I have been responsible for exhibitions and museum education. A great share of my daily work consists of collaboration or developing collaboration structures with the Sámi communities, Sámi individuals or with other Sámi organizations. As I interact within the Sámi community, my family and other connections and kinships are the challenges and advantages I must face. They define my position, who I am and where I belong, even whether others are willing to co-operate and collaborate with me and the museum I represent.

For the Sámi kinship and family is base of existence and the meaning of family and kinship differs from non-indigenous patrilinear nuclear family concept. The importance on kinship can be spotted also in the Sámi languages. The Sámi have more names for different kinships than for example in Indo-European languages. For example, the word uncle can be translated in Northern Sámi to *eahki* (ego's father's older brother), čeahci (ego's father's younger brother), *eanu* (ego's mother's brother) or even *máhka* (a man's brother-in-law). According to Aage Solbakk this rich kinship terminology tells that the Sámi pay close attention to kinship and it has a prominent meaning to Sámi society. He continues, that the meaning of family and kinship has diminished as the influence of the Nordic welfare state has increased in Sápmi, but still knowing one's kinships and even distant relatives

is something the Sámi consider valuable and a tradition passed on to next generation (Solbakk and Solbakk 2005, 45).

To base one's identity and position to interconnections with others is not unique to the Sámi people, but typical for indigenous peoples. As for example indigenous scholars Taiaiake Alfred and Jeff Corntassel (Alfred and Corntassel 2005, 609) write:

> Building on this notion of a dynamic and interconnected concept of Indigenous identity constituted in history, ceremony, language and land, we consider relationships (or kinship networks) to be at the core of an authentic Indigenous identity. Clearly, it is the need to maintain respectful relationships that guides all interactions and experiences with community, clans, families, individuals, homelands, plants, animals etc. in the Indigenous cultural ideal.
>
> The understanding of family and kinship is one of the main differences that separate Sámi and non-Sámi and indigenous and non-indigenous communities.

For the Sámi kinship is the base for categorizing members of society. A Sámi primarily represents his/her family and the attributes connected to that certain family. I'll clarify this by taking my own family as an example. I'm a *Vulleš* and the other Sámis will interpret that it means that I'm slow, pensive and keen to study and read. It also tells, that I identify myself strongly to a certain area in *Ohcejohka* and I might have problems to get along with some families, because of the conflicts of the past and as our ways to behave and communicate are so different. When I meet a Sámi unknown to me or who does not know me, I need to introduce myself and tell where I come from and who are my parents and grandparents. The other will bring forward the same themes and together we will try to find common nominators: how we are connected, are we related, or do we have common ancestry. All this may or may not affect how people interact with me, what knowledge they are willing to share and whether there will be any co-operation. To be part of the community provides us with a special insight, but it is also the greatest challenge. The possibilities to collaboration and the form and outcome of the collaboration are based on my position in the community. This kind of connection building is essential in Sámi context and if you don't know your family and ancestry, you will be disjointed from the community you wish to collaborate. In that case you must find other means to overcome the gap between yourself and the institution you represent and the community member you need in collaboration. In non-indigenous world – especially in professional

connections – it is even seen inappropriate to bring forward one's family connections instead of career merits or titles and it may raise suspicion of favouring relatives. This separation of positioning oneself should not be seen as an obstacle, but as an example how different worldviews can complete each other. The first step is respect and equality between indigenous and non-indigenous understandings. Collaborate on an equal basis with indigenous communities requires museum professionals to adapt behaviour, use of language and even the way they present themselves. If the relationship with the community as museum worker and member of the community is respectful, as described by Alfred and Corntassel, the probability for an outcome that is beneficial both for the museum and for the community improves.

In the museum world, and in everywhere in Western academia, a researcher and museum worker outside the community is seen neutral and objective, without affiliations to the community in question. To be an objective researcher is seen something to pursue and it is even required in some occasions. Not to be objective enough has been a handicap for indigenous professionals working with their own culture and they are not seen neutral enough. An outsider has not the downsides of belonging to some family or language group. Compared to apparent neutrality of an outsider, an insider has the cultural competence to interpret and understand the culture and cultural phenomena is seen less important and to be compensated by studying the community and the culture concerned. Looking from the indigenous viewpoint, to be an indigenous person working with your own community has many advantages, that defeat the benefits of being neutral. Within one's own people, communication is easy; the insider shares a common language and cultural background with the community. One is a known member of the community and has the authority and the capability to evaluate the reliability of the cultural knowledge that is shared in the collaboration.

In the case of indigenous cultures, museum and its museum professionals are outsiders and thus in non-indigenous understanding seen to be objective, more qualified and better-informed than indigenous individuals living in the culture. What is neglected here is the role of the outsider as non-indigenous. The position of any non-indigenous in an indigenous community or collaboration is complicated by the history of all the former outsiders and by the burdened relationship between non-indigenous and the indigenous culture. Without reconciliation the outsider museum professional inevitable retain and carry on the dark legacy of earlier museum professionals and their deeds. This legacy will affect reliability of information collected

and all collaboration between the indigenous community and non-indigenous museum.

The non-indigenous knowledge and understanding of indigenous culture is one version how to understand and interpret indigenous heritage and culture. Again, indigenous insight gives possibilities to collect and share different perspective to the same heritage and culture, only seen from an indigenous viewpoint. The more knowledge we can collect together, the better and versatile the picture of a culture will be. As for so long the indigenous knowledge and understanding has been neglected in museum, the indigenousness should be taken as a starting point for all work in an indigenous museum, as a compensation for the situation earlier. We indigenous peoples should have equal possibilities present our views of our culture in museum. As Sámi scholar Luobbal-Sámmol Sámmol concludes: "*Ii guhtege sáhtte duhtat dan govvii iežaš birra, maid nuppit ráhkadit iežaset luhtte, muhto juohkehaš berre beassat duddjot iežáš oaivila iežaš birra ja oažžut friijavuođa oaidnit nuppiidge iežaš čalmmiiguin.*" (Nobody can be content with the picture of oneself, that others have made, but everyone should have the opportunity to form their own opinion of themselves and have the freedom to see others through their own eyes)[10] (Aikio 1992, 10).

Conclusion

Like the old museum buildings with staircases are not accessible for a person using a wheelchair, museum as an institution, its structures, exhibitions and collections are not culturally accessible for indigenous peoples. As well as we need to build accessible museum buildings and renovate the old ones, we need to change the museum and its structures to be equally open for indigenous knowledge, understanding and worldviews.

In this paper I have discussed the history of Sámi museum and museum's colonial legacy. I have presented two cases, where according to my opinion, indigenous Sámi understanding, and non-indigenous museum understanding collide. The collision of two worlds ends that the suppressed and marginalized culture, as the indigenous Sámi, and its worldview, knowledge and understandings is not taken in consideration on an equal basis. The result is, that the Sámi ways to communicate, define cultural heritage or even Sámi heritage itself

10 Translation from Northern Sámi by the author

is nor recognized and underrepresented in museum, museum collections and exhibitions. The long-term consequence may be, that Sámi heritage will be not be protected as well as majority heritage, which may even effect to the vitality and of the Sámi culture and in actualizing the Sámi rights as indigenous people.

Throughout the museum is a need to look back and admit and reconcile the unjust museum practices. At the same time museum and museum work must look on to the future and consider the role and possibilities of the museum in future. I see that in this process of making museum culturally accessible, the indigenous museum professionals are the key factor. Because of our academic museum education, we know museum from the inside, its history, its advantages and disadvantages as well as the discussions and discourses of the museum field. At the same time, we are indigenous individuals working with our own culture. We know our community, its strengths and its traumas and the needs and hopes of our people. By combining these two we can change the museum, indigenize it to an indigenous museum that has indigenous values, worldviews and needs as its foundation.

According to the ICOM statutes museum is "a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment." (ICOM 2007, article 3, section 1). Though the colonial history of museum makes the relationship between indigenous peoples and museum complex, in the very end, the museum and indigenous peoples have similar the aims and objectives. Museum is a memory institution with capability and ability to remember far longer than individuals. The purpose of museum is to conserve knowledge and again communicate it back to people. The indigenous peoples want to conserve their knowledge and keep indigenous culture alive, take care of the traditions, language, worldview and values and pass them on to next generation. Only the means and emphases differ.

I state, that indigenous museum professionals can be a bridge between indigenous communities and museum. As members of two worlds, we can create understanding and cooperation beneficial for both sides. Indigenous museum professionals can be mediators in the process of indigenizing museum but also change indigenous communities' attitudes towards museum. And maybe in the future there will no longer be two contested worlds working with indigenous heritage, but one team working together in a more equal post-colonial world.

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Valeria Pica

Trembling walls. When the earthquake changes the identity of local museums

Abstract In 2016 the central regions of Italy were affected by a set of tremendous seism and many tremors reawakened the fear in the area of L'Aquila where a massive earthquake destroyed the city and the community in 2009. More than 300 people died and the city has been only partially reconstructed; in the meanwhile the community got crumbled as well as the walls.

As a consequence of that, the social fabric has deeply changed as well as the cultural agenda. A memory space was opened in 2011 and the National Museum of Abruzzo in L'Aquila in opened its doors again in 2015 in a new building and in a different area of the city. This paper aims to examine how museums changed in the perception of citizens and visitors and verify if they talk about the experience of the earthquake.

Local museums can become a key agent in the comprehension of the cultural identity and memory. They can represent privileged locations to enhance social inclusion, to talk about difficult stories, to rethink at the cultural implications of history.

Keywords collective memory, historical memory, cultural identity, local museum, revitalization, social inclusion

The 21st-century museum should guarantee full accessibility and inclusiveness to all audiences. For decades educators argued about its educational role, now it is probably time to better focus and discuss its social role as a facilitator between and within communities. This issue is sensitive in those areas where the social and cultural habits were changed and transformed due to a sudden event. This challenge is faced day by day in areas affected by an earthquake where the social fabric has been lost or deeply fragmented (Sciolla 2003).

On 6 April 2009 the city of L'Aquila experienced one of the most severe earthquake in Italy. L'Aquila lies in the centre of Italy along the Apennines and by the Gran Sasso mountain, namely the highest peak of this area about 3,000m high. As many mountain areas, the city is not easily accessible and services are not always available. Winters can be very cold and snowy, this information is needed to understand the context where the disaster occurred. Many tremors for many months affected the area, but nobody expected a 6.2 magnitude one that caused over 300 victims. The clock tower in L'Aquila is still crystallised at 3:32am, the moment of the strongest tremor that caused the first victims and destruction. Many more people died in the following months and years because of increasing cancer and breath diseases, but this is a part of the story that has never been told. Furthermore, the most of the population moved from the city and probably will never get back. Their homes are still not habitable and their job, their families, their kids started a new cycle of life elsewhere.

Consequences in a historical centre with medieval and mainly 17th-century buildings were massive. The city hall, some churches representing the core centre and the historical identity of the city were destroyed. Even talking about churches is suitable to say historical centre for the peculiar foundation system of the city. L'Aquila, indeed, was designed according to a specific order and criterion in the 13th century when all the villages of the area rounded up to build a fortified city. So, tradition says that 99 villages were involved to built 99 squares, 99 churches, and 99 fountains to become the pole of the new communities installing them. It means that losing a church brought to lose part of the local community identity.

In the aftermath of the earthquake the National Museum of Abruzzo housed in the 16th-century castle was closed due to damages to the structure and the collections were moved to a safe place located on the opposite side of the city. That also meant a radical change in the cultural axe because the area

is far from the centre, not easily accessible but it was the best possible choice to open the museum again and give the community its cultural hub back.

The 'new' museum was opened to the public in December 2015 and housed in the former slaughterhouse of L'Aquila, built between 1881 and 1883 and closed in 1990. In the new temporary location, after restoration and repairs carried out between 2010 and 2015, a selection of archaeological finds and paintings, sculptures and jewellery from the Middle Ages to the modern era, made safe by advanced anti-seismic protections, have been exposed. These masterpieces testify the history and the vitality of this region and its culture, some of them were found under the ruins of the earthquake, brought back to new life thanks to complex restoration works. It is actually said the museum that lived twice because of an impressive work of inventory, restoration and redisplay of the collection. The artworks themselves do not talk about the earthquake, but the display, the new location, the protections tell a different story that is hard to hide.

Another museum in the area of L'Aquila was also opened a few years after 2009 and was dedicated to the memory of the city. In these terms, it is still today the only memory space allowing a focus on local museums to see how they interpret the point of no return for the community who stays and for the one that leaves.

The story through images sometimes serves to avoid words weakened by time, which cannot add anything to emotion and sentiment for a place (Fabietti and Matera 1999). The emotion that is perceived entering the Space of Memory in Fontecchio derives from the delicacy and sincere sharing with which the memories, traumas and hopes of rebirth have been exposed.

The Space was born with the aim to re-establish a connection with the territory, to rediscover those stones that preserved individual or community stories, which represented and represent the deep identity of the place. Identity is closely tied to memory, one as an integral part of the other and what matters most in this moment of reflection and awareness of the current situation is the transmission of historical memory, that is to say the ocean towards which all the partial stories converge as a single great shrine of feelings very conflicting with each other (Assmann 1997).

There are many memories to be asked and heard, all parts of a process of identification (Candau 1982) that is necessary to reconstruct together with the monuments symbolising the territory of L'Aquila. The individual memories with personal and family stories are associated and merged with the collective memory, which transmits us through the memory, or a set of

memories, an experience lived together with tenacity and kindness (Halbwachs 1997). All these stories and experiences give body and shape to the feelings that people daily live in the places of collective tragedies.

After the earthquake occurred 6 April 2009 there was a disconnection between the memories that traced the passage of time and there is a strong need to remodel the memory from the rubble. From the break in the land new small fruits begin to blossom, like a sign of the will to revitalize the urban and social fabric of these land, and rebuild with many pieces, all precious, the historical memory and cultural memory. This is needed also to establish again the relations between memory, identity and participation in cultural life that represent the constitution of tradition (Montesperelli 2003). Historical memory and cultural memory have undergone an abrupt suspension and one has to draft and live again the tradition of territories rich in stories and people, to whom the sense of belonging to places of life has been denied (Nora 1984).

The village lies in an intimate valley of the Abruzzo region. Fontecchio is a microcosm, one of the many small, isolated, fragile municipalities that dot the Italian interior areas. The earthquake has accelerated and amplified phenomena of decomposition and entropy already active before that night (Taddei 2014). And now, the physical restoration of places proceeds in parallel with the revitalization of a more cohesive community.

The heart of reflection and actions is the interaction between the place and the inhabitant community. The conviction was symbolically expressed in 2013 with the acceptance of the municipality of Fontecchio to the principles of the *Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society* (Faro Convention) which underlines the role that cultural heritage plays for the building of a democratic and peaceful society, and for its sustainable development.

The previous year, the sharing of an identity atlas and development expectations had already been concretely the subject of a deliberative democracy process called *Borghi Attivi* (active villages) (Held 2014). This was reflected in the concept of cultural heritage as defined in the Faro Convention, art. 2, i.e.:

> a set of resources inherited from the past that populations identify, regardless of their belonging, as a reflection and expression of their values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions, constantly evolving. It includes all aspects of the environment that are the result of the interaction between man and places over time.

In a reconciled relationship between man and landscape, the valorisation of heritage fully appears as a relational protection; each inhabitant assumes a portion of the responsibility to preserve, make use, enrich the inheritance in which he/she identifies himself/herself.

The Space of Memory aims to be a place of reflection, not of sad commemoration, a place in which one can find a glimpse, a smile, a detail that reminds and makes you reflect through the gaze of a photographer who observes the future of his city. To reach the Space, visitors enter the historical centre of the town and take a short walk that already allows getting in touch with the territory and the history of Fontecchio. As in all the fortified medieval villages, next to the main door is the Guard Corps defending the entrance to the town. In Fontecchio, the Guard Corps is enriched with an indispensable tool for the investigation of life from the Middle Ages onwards, that is to say the clock for the organization of social and work life. As the medievalist writer Le Goff argued, people were used to obey to the time imposed by the bells and, not only to work in the fields, time observed a precise partition of the hours of the day marked by the sound of the only clock in the village.

The mechanism still preserved in the Clock Tower is one of the oldest in Italy and it is a six-hour clock, called Roman because it is more widespread in the churches and monasteries of Rome and Lazio. The main function was to indicate the Italian hours, adopted in the ecclesiastical context and the measurement, from 12th to 18th century, did not begin from midnight, but from the prayer of Hail Mary recited in the evening towards twilight, that is to say half an hour after the sunset. The only hand of the six-hour clock had to travel four full laps to mark the twenty-four hours. Some literary references from Giorgio Vasari to Alessandro Manzoni, from Niccolò Machiavelli to Benvenuto Cellini lead us to the use of the Italian hours that refer to the custom of calculating the hours from the sunset onwards. So, for example, the "eleven beats" at the stroke of which Renzo wakes up after escaping from Milan in Manzoni's *I Promessi Sposi* are about five in the morning according to the current calculation.

Along the road, the clock tower appears in front of the visitor and the vertical thrust is accentuated by the presence of Palazzo Muzi, a noble palace that draws the profile of the village as one approaches it. The Palace, with its luxurious furnishings and the vastness of its surroundings, also recalls a period in which the village represented a vital centre and a strategic junction for the entire Aterno river valley.

The collection is displayed in the watchtower and the photographs make the visitor go back in time with a clear look to the simplicity of life before the earthquake, without forgetting the drama of the stolen lives and the places of memory destroyed. The exhibition plays on multiple levels of the gaze taking advantage of the vertical development of the tower housing it, so as to reconstruct, as in a game of references, all the memories and views. The different sections gradually build the story of the places in a continuous recall between past and present, offering images of the city of L'Aquila and Fontecchio seen through the decades to remember its beauty and fragility, to leave a trace in the memories.

The display of the photographs by Roberto Grillo allows an ascensional exhibition of the works suggesting the delicacy of the themes. The architects Carlo Mangolini and Marcello Deroma have interpreted with great finesse and analytical skills the relationships and references of the photographs in order to create an intense dialogue between the images and their suggestions. To make the visit experience coherent, four main areas have been identified that tell the story of L'Aquila and Fontecchio:

Recent past: contains shots taken in the city of L'Aquila between the 80s and 90s of the 20th century that give back fragments of everyday life between the streets, squares and fountains. The glimpses of buildings, streets, faces, tell the vitality and the strong belonging of the citizens with their city in a crescendo of emotions and memories that are found in the most intimate details.

Remote past: offers a historic view of the two centres with photographs dating back to the 30s of the 20th century where the common roots of the territory of L'Aquila emerge, as a solid testimony of the traditions, the landscape and architectural treasures. The photographs and postcards of the period show the landscape and architectural beauties of L'Aquila and Fontecchio; they reconstruct the historical and urban nexus of the medieval foundation of the city made by all the castles of the countryside. A city-territory that saw in its birth the value of sharing and collective participation.

Present time: preserves images taken immediately after the earthquake and placed into a hypogeal space. They are the only colour-photographs in the exhibition telling the contemporary drama, with dignity and strength, and recalling the 309 names of the victims written by subtraction on the stele placed at the sides of the entrance (fig. 1, p. 90). Even the format changes, the illuminated screens capture the attention with the sharpness of the photographic lens on what the memory of those days has indelibly imprinted on the residents' minds. The ruins of the buildings, people embraced in an

attempt to regain strength and vitality, the blue sky that overlooks a collapsed roof, and then the white coffins arranged in a geometrically disarming order, almost to recompose what had been distorted.

Comparisons: creates a visual link between past and present through a comparison on three historically sequential moments of some monuments in L'Aquila (the Basilica of Collemaggio, the churches of 'Anime Sante' and San Pietro). The black and white offers the possibility to observe in detail the alterations and retrace the architectural and decorative changes from the baroque reconstruction – after the earthquake occurred in 1703 – to the restoration of Romanesque forms made in the 70s of the 20th century (fig. 2, p. 91). When the restoration of the three churches will be completed, a fourth step will be added with the restitution to the community that marks the final phase of reconstruction work following the 2009 earthquake. This element is of particular importance because it tells of the continuous evolution of the collection and underlines the attention of the municipality towards the ongoing route that is being conducted to revitalize and rebuild the city and its community.

A multimedia station is added to the four sections allowing to deepen the knowledge of places with vintage images and postcards and, above all, providing information on seismic prevention to raise awareness of all age groups on the issues of heritage and landscape protection, and how to deal with seismic events. The educational tool wants to provide not only useful information but, using an accessible language, allows all visitors to know, verify and understand the essential rules to face situations of risk and reinforce the sense of belonging to start a process of active protection of the cultural and environmental heritage.

The goal of the Space of Memory is to contribute to redefining the collective identity of the local community through awareness-raising actions in which the participation and the memory of all are the centre of the reconstruction of the social and cultural fabric (Crane 1997). Shortly, the hope is the creation of a heritage community as indicated in the Faro Convention, article 2, and identified as a "group of people who attribute value to specific aspects of the cultural heritage they wish to support and transmit to future generations, in the framework of a public action". In this sense, the right to cultural heritage that every citizen can and must exercise manifests itself in the participation and the assumption of responsibility even in reviving the memories or reconstructing together the sense of belonging to such a delicate and dense place of meaning.

Fig. 1: L'Aquila: Space of Memory, interior. Photo: Valeria Pica, 2017

In this perspective, the research and recovery of collective memory aim at redefining and reconciling with the territory in a broader perspective of sharing and cooperation to start activities respectful of places and "enrich the processes of economic, political, social and cultural development" (Faro Convention, art. 8). All that is part of a set of actions aimed at achieving a common goal for those who live and visit small villages such as Fontecchio, namely to improve the quality of life and strengthen social cohesion (De Martin and Bolognino 2010) in order to look at cultural heritage as a precious source for cultural and collective memory. The heritage walks, organized on

Fig. 2: Comparison on three historical moments of the churches of 'Anime Sante' and San Pietro, and the Basilica of Collemaggio in L'Aquila. Photo: Valeria Pica, 2017

various occasions over the last few years, usually end in the Space of Memory and represent one of the examples of collaboration in the community (Bauman 2007) and enhancement of memory in which the narrative of macro-history that has crossed the walls and streets resembles the narrative of the people who offer glimpses of lived life and moments of micro-history capable to make the places more real and closer to the listener. This methodology contains the deepest meaning of the Space of Memory that welcomes itself and transmits through the images of L'Aquila the places, stories and people that represent the essence of cultural heritage.

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Kristel Rattus, Terje Anepaio

Managing the other: Stories of the Estonian Russian-speakers in the Estonian National Museum's core exhibition

Abstract In October 2016, the Estonian National Museum opened its new building and new core exhibitions. The exhibition about Estonian culture, *Encounters*, introduced several new topics as well as novel approaches, which highlight the points of contact between different social groups, and stress the importance of tolerance and equality.

The largest minority in Estonia are the Russian-speakers. Yet, it has not been common to exhibit the Russian-speakers' culture in Estonian museums. In the Estonian public discourse, the tendency has rather been to contrast the two communities. *Encounters*, however, aimed to create a dialogue. The paper will address some challenges, which occurred in the communication with the Russian-speaking community during the preparation of the exhibition. Firstly, the museum was to win the Russian-speakers' trust. Secondly, the Russian-speakers sometimes considered exposing one's everyday culture in a museum improper.

Keywords Estonian National Museum, core exhibition, Estonian Russians, collaborative museum, oral history

In October 2016, the Estonian National Museum opened a core exhibition on the history of Estonian culture in its newly completed exhibition building. Entitled *Encounters*, it is markedly different from previous core exhibitions at the National Museum. The new features are based on a renewed understanding of the role of the Estonian National Museum in the early 21st century.

In addition to practical questions, the preparations for a new house and new core exhibitions[1] between 2008 and 2016 also raised methodological and ideological issues for the Estonian National Museum, leading the institution to more clearly articulate its goals and identity. What could we maintain from the existing National Museum, and what should be changed? What sort of museum would Estonian society need? The museum kept on coming back to these questions. Reaching agreement on the principles and approach to the exhibition, which told the story of Estonia's culture, became the central locus of the re-defining of the National Museum's identity in these years.

The popular image of the Estonian National Museum has traditionally been bound to pre-industrial Estonian peasant culture. Founded in 1909, the idea of the Estonian National Museum actually goes back to the height of the era of nationalism and the creation of nation-states[2]. The course of the development of the Estonian state and the Estonian National Museum have much in common with the development of other nation-states and national museums in north and east Europe during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The National Museum was to be one of the instruments of the new national society and a celebration of Estonian nationality.

Today, the so-called traditional 19th century view of the nation has become outdated. In a contemporary society, people's identities are diverse and dynamic. People travel often, the places where they live and work may not be located in their country of birth, cross-border marriages are common. Museum audiences are also increasingly international. Nevertheless, according to the results of EuNaMus[3], a comparative study of European

1 At present there are two core exhibitions at the Estonian National Museum, one about Estonian culture, entitled *Encounters,* and the other about Finno-Ugric cultures, entitled *Echo of the Urals*.

2 In Western Europe, these processes occurred during the first half of the 19th century following the Napoleonic Wars, while in north and east Europe, they took place in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

3 An international project conducted under the auspices of Linköping University and Professor Peter Aronson, the full title being *European National Museums: Identity Politics, the Uses of the Past and the European Citizen* (EU FP Grant Agreement No. 244305).

national museums held between 2010 and 2013, national museums still have an important role in dealing with topics that pertain to membership of a nation, citizenship of a state and the role of specific nationalities among other nationalities. Museum-goers attach great significance to their own and their ancestors' places of origin. On one hand, the displayed artefacts and stories offer stability that allows people to feel at home in a world with open borders, while on the other trying to reformulate traditional national narratives according to contemporary needs, for example having room for actors other than just national heroes (see Robin 2013).

In the 20th century, the National Museum's core exhibitions (1927, 1947, 1994) focused on 19th and 20th century farm life. With the exception of an exhibition influenced by Soviet ideology opened in 1947, the core exhibitions were characterised by a National Romantic attitude: in the 1920s, the liberation of Estonian society from Baltic German influence was commemorated; in the 1990s, freedom from the Soviet occupation (see Nõmmela 2010; Reemann 2011). Most other social and cultural groups apart from Estonian peasants were absent. In the early 21st century, however, such approaches to Estonian national culture no longer adequately described the issues of interest to the National Museum. Since the 1990s, the National Museum has been dealing with and studying the everyday culture of non-peasant people, the Soviet period and contemporary life. These topics were, however, seen only in the temporary exhibitions, not the core exhibition.

When they started to outline the concept of the Estonian cultural history exhibition, the curators sensed a need both to take a more contemporary approach to national culture and to highlight the contemporary spectrum of interests at the Estonian National Museum. Firstly, for the *Encounters* exhibition Estonia was seen as a territory not in the sense of just one ethnicity; and the periods prior to the 19th and 20th centuries, as well as later periods, were defined as also an object of interest. As part of the exhibition concept the curators set out to present the everyday cultures of different cultural and social groups in Estonia throughout the history of settlement. No matter how unrealistic this was, these terms of reference summoned the most important innovation in the institutional identity of the Estonian National Museum: the main interest was placed on the population as a whole – not just speakers of Estonian.

Another goal for the National Museum was to involve more societal groups in the content generation process for the museum. In this regard, the museum drew inspiration from a methodological approach known as new or critical (Bouquet 2012, 9) museology (see Vergo 1989; Hooper-Greenhill

1992; Marstine 2005; Macdonald 2006). This philosophy, which came into greater currency in early 21st-century Estonia, is neither uniform nor clearly delineated. With the new building on the horizon, the Estonian National Museum selected above all the idea of bidirectional communication and the empowerment of audiences (Runnel and Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt 2010; Tatsi 2013; see also Simon 2010).

The method of dialogue

The general title *Encounters* refers to a complex of 12 independent exhibitions. The axis of *Encounters* is made up of an overview of Estonian cultural history called *Journeys in Time*, expanded and supplemented with thematic exhibitions. Among them are familiar topics for the Estonian National Museum, such as exhibitions devoted to traditional Estonian folk culture and the rather well researched and exhibited[4] everyday culture of the Soviet period. In addition, there are topics that have not previously been customary for the Estonian National Museum, for example approaches to archaeology as well as aspects of intangible culture such as the Estonian language and runo song. Some exhibitions tackle the contemporary period, for example food culture and ways in which children and young adults experience the city. Other exhibitions take in the physical environment directly surrounding people by looking at the home and the natural environment. There is a separate exhibition hall for open curatorship[5] projects. Topics brought into the exhibition hall reflect different facets of subjective human experiences. There are personal stories of people of different gender, class, ethnicity and age. The crucial applied approach was to find a method that would be suitable to present different and sometimes conflicting cultural heritages. Here, the term ‘dialogue’ became central. Curators used it as the theoretical underpinning for the exhibition concept as well as a practical method for creating the exhibition. Dialogue

4 Systematic research into everyday life in the Soviet Union started at the Estonian National Museum in 2002 with a research project financed by the Estonian Science Foundation (ETF5322) called *Strategies and Practices of Everyday Life in Soviet Estonia*. The implementers of the project, led by University of Tartu ethnologists, included Estonian National Museum researchers Terje Anepaio, Reet Piiri and Ellen Värv, and head of collections Riina Reinvelt.

5 Open curatorship involves an institution (for example museum) delegating decision-making power over the content of an exhibition (or other museum production) partially or completely to authors outside the museum. Curatorship projects allow participants to use the institutions to satisfy their goals with minimal institutional intervention.

was treated as a principle that takes into consideration different subjective views and possibilities for interpretation without seeking a single meaning behind phenomena. Depicting social processes and events from several viewpoints, as seen by different participants, seemed to enable the creation of a multifaceted "thick" (Geertz 1973) description of cultural phenomena and avoid excessive reduction of the controversies that are inherent to any culture. An overview of a culture can be gained on the basis of subjective views when they are analysed in the context of a larger tradition and context into which they fit historically. "Dialogue" viewed in this manner does not deny subjective approaches, at the same time it takes into account the tradition of relating to such approaches and the contexts into which they fit (Gadamer 1975, 269).

The 'other': Russian-speakers

Russian-speakers are the most numerous minority in Estonia making up about one quarter of the 1.3 million population. Estonia's current ethnic composition took shape during the period of the Soviet occupation and annexation (1944–91), when several hundred thousand people from all over the Soviet Union moved to and through Estonia. Many of these people were offered jobs in Estonia, many came with the military. Most of the newcomers settled in the capital city of Tallinn and in the rapidly growing industrial centres in north-east Estonia (Sakkeus 1999, 320). Even though the newcomers were not all ethnically Russian, their common language was Russian.

While in the Soviet system Russians and the Russian language occupied a central and ubiquitous position, the regime change of 1991 along with subsequent Estonian-centred citizenship and language policies pushed Russian-speakers into a marginal and relatively restricted geographical and social space (Seljamaa 2016, 29; Jaago and Kõresaar 2012, 43). After the post-communist turn, the dominant discourse in the Estonian (oral) history[6]

6 Oral history and life story research in Estonia started off in the mid-1990s as an interdisciplinary endeavour to gather and interpret autobiographical testimonies about the violent 20th century. In 1989, the Estonian Cultural Historical Archives announced the first life story writing campaign. Even though over the following 20 years, the endeavour enjoyed immense popularity, only a relatively small number of contributions were authored by Russians. During the 1990s, the collecting of life stories was related to the cultural restorationism in Estonian society and celebrated cultural, life historical and (ethnic) national unity (see Kõresaar and Jõesalu 2016).

has conceptualised the Soviet era mainly in terms of rupture and trauma, depicting the restoration of independence as a return from deviation to normality. It thereby contributed to the formation of the post-Soviet memory regime, which covered only a fraction of the spectrum of experience of the Soviet period and tended to mute memories contesting the national trauma story. Soviet-period newcomers have thus been treated as “henchmen of the occupation regime” (Seljamaa 2016, 31) and where confined to the position of oppressor (while Estonians, at the same time, were treated as victims). In this context, the Soviet-era settlers as the stigmatised collective ‘other’ have remained an overlooked and understudied subject. A change in the paradigm came with the turn of the century, when oral historians and memory researchers started to focus methodically on the multi-layeredness of the Soviet period and diverse everyday experiences of socialism (Kõresaar and Jõesalu 2016, 51, 53, 56).

However, to this day, in life stories, memories of the Soviet period are presented in several different mnemonic discourses (Aarelaid-Tart 2012). Compared to Estonians, the biographical schemata of Estonian Russians in the Soviet period are the exact opposite: while the Estonians tend to stress the horror of losing homes and families in the post-war period, Russians, in contrast, describe the post-war time as a peaceful period after the atrocities of the war. The regime change of 1991, which, for Estonians meant national independence and the opportunity for political and cultural self-determination, is reflected in biographies of the Russian-speakers in terms of shock at the establishment of a border between Estonia and Russia, at Estonian gaining the status of the only national language, or at attitudes towards the World War II and the subsequent Soviet occupation (Kõresaar and Jõesalu 2016, 53; see also Jaago 2004).

Similar tendencies hold true with the Estonian National Museum. It has researched and displayed Soviet culture and everyday life more systematically since the beginning of this century (for example by means of publishing questionnaires aimed at the public). However, until now, the research and exhibitions have focused mainly on Estonians or on general trends in society, the voice of the Russian-speaking community has generally been missing from the exhibitions.

Parallel Worlds. Parallel Lives

Parallel Worlds. Parallel Lives[7], one of the themed exhibitions that formed part of *Encounters*, is devoted to life during the Soviet period. The exhibition

is based on the autobiographical life stories of people who were all in some way connected with Estonia during the Cold War era. Grounding the whole exhibition on autobiographical narratives proceeded from the curators' intent to present an emotional human-centred view of everyday life during a diverse and controversial period. The telling of life stories as a socio-communicative activity is a means to establish a common ground in cultural remembering: a shared memory (Kõresaar 2016, 4). By displaying autobiographies at a National Museum exhibition, we hoped to engender empathy and understanding between different language groups in Estonia. We expected that by showing different narratives of life experience, different historical narratives could be reconciled.

The exhibition gives a voice to 15 people, born in the 1930s and 1940s, whose personal objects and biographical stories give viewers a glimpse of life from the 1940s to the 1980s in Soviet Estonia. Taking a global look at the Cold War era meant presenting stories from both sides of the Iron Curtain, including people who lived in the Soviet Union as well as the Estonian diaspora in Western Europe, Australia and the Americas. Some protagonists had spent their whole lives in Estonia, others had fled from Estonia to the West from the Red Army during World War II, been violently deported to Siberia or settled in the Soviet Union by choice; conversely some had moved to Estonia from other parts of the Soviet Union.

A biography is rarely passed on as a narrative whole. In everyday communication, people relate fragments of life rather than comprehensive life stories. This fact gave us a starting point for the exhibition design. We focused on themes raised by our protagonists and structured these topics into ten themed clusters, each giving voice to 2–4 people. The clusters were titled using a summarising keyword (for example happiness, success, trauma, regret, chance, etc.). Topics relating to a particular keyword were displayed in the same showcase. Five of the showcases concentrated on different decades of the Cold War: the 1940s, 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. In addition, two touchscreens outlined the protagonists' basic autobiographical data. By presenting these momentary glimpses into people's worlds by means of their personal objects, photographs, archival documents, and narrated memories, we attempted to create a space in which simultaneous experiences and life-worlds proceed in parallel without intersecting. In the autobiographical

7 *Parallel Worlds. Parallel Lives* was curated by Terje Anepaio, Anu Järs, Ellen Värv and Riina Reinvelt.

narratives, voiced by the protagonists themselves, personal events of everyday life, such as birth, childhood, education, working life, family life, illness, travel, etc., interweave with major events in history, such as coups d'états, occupations, wars, etc.

Finding Russian-speaking protagonists

Finding Russian-speaking protagonists who would agree to share their personal narratives as part of the exhibition turned out to be more challenging than we first expected. In order to find suitable individuals, the curators co-operated with different institutions of Russian-speaking communities (for example museums, cultural societies) as well as the Estonian national media.

The Estonian National Museum started documenting the culture of the Estonian Russian-speakers at the beginning of the 21st century. The first autobiographic interviews were conducted in both Estonian and Russian in the city of Narva, situated on the Russian border in north-east Estonia, in cooperation with Tartu University Narva College and the Pro Narva foundation, between 2003 and 2005 (see Reinvelt 2005). As a result of the endeavour, over 2,200 pages of text were collected by the archive of the Estonian National Museum. Conducted by students, the interviews were short and rather superficial; however, they offered us a valuable starting point for further interviews as the informants were selected based on these interviews. In summer 2012, we restarted audio-visual documentation in north-east Estonia, specifically oriented at the preparation of the future exhibition. We contacted 12 people, four of whom agreed to speak in front of the camera. In addition, we studied the Russian-language autobiographies published by the Estonian Life Stories association.[8] We assumed that people who had already published their life story would be more likely to agree to talk about their lives on camera. Yevgeni (born 1943) was one of the protagonists whose life story had been previously published (Paklar 2009). A miner by profession, but a journalist by calling, he was a voluntary correspondent to several media publications in north-east Estonia. Apart from talking to us, he also wrote us

8 NGO Estonian Life Stories Association (ELSA) was founded in 1996 at the Estonian Literary Museum. Since 1997 the association has published 12 anthologies of life stories from the Estonian Literary Museum's life stories collection. Life story competitions are organised by the association to this day.

an additional story about his childhood in Russia. However, finding personal objects that could be displayed in the exhibition to illustrate his story was challenging.

In 2016, the year the new museum building was opened, we decided to launch a call through Estonian National Television's Russian channel in the hope of reaching wider Russian-speaking audiences. The response was less than expected, but after the call, one of the future protagonists, Paraskovja (born 1929), contacted us. In 1948, Paraskovja and a female friend responded to an industrial recruitment drive in the Soviet Union and ended up in Estonia. Her story mainly reflected on her career – her life and work in Sillamäe, the former Soviet closed nuclear industry town.

Compared to Estonians, the Russian-speakers had a different understanding of what was suitable to be presented in a museum. Among them, mainly items of art were seen as worthy of being presented, while everyday life objects were not valued as highly. This may be due to a different cultural background as well as a scarcity of material culture among Russian-speakers. On the one hand, the experience of the informants was limited to the large and sumptuous Russian museums that they had visited during the Soviet period, such as the Hermitage in St Petersburg. On the other hand, they often simply lacked things they could have given to the museum. As they explained, they came to Estonia during and immediately after World War II when life was dangerous and poor: they had fled from regions ravaged by war with only the clothes they were wearing.

Another challenge in the communication with Russians came from their lack of confidence in us. It turned out that the generally positive image of the Estonian National Museum that is commonly shared by Estonians, especially by the older generation (see Nõmmela 2010), was generally unknown among Russian-speakers. When we said that we were interviewing for an upcoming exhibition at the National Museum, we were not trusted. Many refused to talk on camera because they were afraid that the interviews might be shown on television. More often than not the Russian-speaking community had little or no information about the current Estonian cultural space, including museums.

Often the people whose personal items, photographs, etc., are displayed in the exhibition act as a bridge between the museum and its visitors. When

9 In fact, Yevgeni's personal objects and interview fragments were displayed in four showcases under the keywords love, happiness, shortage and chance. The love showcase was, however, his favourite.

visiting the exhibition during the opening reception of the museum, Yevgeni was completely satisfied with ‘his showcase’.[9] This showcase, displaying his wife’s wedding dress and wine glasses that were given to the young couple on their marriage, inspired Yevgeni to celebrate his 50th wedding anniversary in the National Museum. On the big day, the venerable couple arrived together with their children, grandchildren, relatives and friends. Even representative of Yevgeni’s home town council came to congratulate the couple. Together they viewed the exhibition and later sat at the party table. Later, Yevgeni’s former colleagues from the oil shale mine also visited the museum. They took lively interest in the exhibitions, but most importantly, they invited the National Museum to visit and discuss the possibility of carrying out autobiographic interviews among predominantly Russian-speaking former miners in north-east Estonia. They saw this as an opportunity to reflect on their contribution to Estonian life and economy (during the Soviet period oil shale production was the flagship of the Estonian economy).

The stories of the Russian-speakers in the core exhibition are an asset for us, the museum staff, because they facilitate the invitation of the Russian-speaking community to our museum. For example, we have organised events in Russian and talked about Russian-speaking community-related topics, such as the premiere of a documentary about the daily life of elderly people in the Estonian-Russian border city Narva and a discussion about the city’s evolution. We also hosted a discussion called *Soviet Sillamäe: Talking about a Closed Town*, at which museum workers from Sillamäe reflected on their lives in a place that was even absent from Soviet maps. This discussion was held in April 2017 with, in the audience, both Estonian- and Russian-speaking people.

Conclusions: a dialogue or a bridge?

Our goal was to include the voices of Russian-speaking people in the story of Estonian cultural history and to create a dialogue between the two Estonian language groups. Did we manage to create a dialogue between the Estonian- and Russian-speaking communities? Perhaps not yet. Rather, we are building a bridge at the level of individuals and smaller groups. People from the Russian-speaking community, especially the older generation, such as former oil shale miners, discovered our museum through the objects and stories of their ‘fellow countryman’. Identification and nostalgia were the emotions they experienced. They saw their own lives and experiences, including

everyday life objects which to them seemed very commonplace, as valued through exhibition. A visit to the museum made them want to save their heritage and share it with society in the same way that they saw this heritage at the museum, i.e. through autobiographical narrative.

The dialogue we wish to build requires an active contribution from both communities. On the one hand, we might wish that Russians were more active in communication with us, but on the other hand, we as the museum could also be much more active as an institution. We have taken a step in this direction. This is likely to be seen and appreciated by representatives of the younger generation – the watershed between the two ethnic groups is smaller in the younger generation. A student from Narva, the mainly Russian-speaking part of Estonia, wrote in the National Museum's blog (http://blog.erm.ee/?p=9675):

> In our cultural space, the new conception of the Estonian National Museum is in many ways ground-breaking. The new core exhibition underlines points of contact between different groups and, without intending to do so, emphasises tolerance and equality. […] The ENM has taken a big step by supporting a constructive dialogue between all people living within the borders of Estonia. I dream that other museums and institutions will follow the example of the ENM.

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Maria Kobielska

Warsaw, 2004 – Gdańsk, 2017. Evolution of the Polish museum boom

Abstract The purpose of my research is to investigate the development of the 'museum boom' in contemporary Poland and analyse the so-emerging new museum model. The 'new museum' has grown into a 'memory device' which shapes and transmits a vision of the past by offering a specific influential remembering pattern. As part of the research work, a comparison between a 'pioneer museum', i.e. the Warsaw Rising Museum (opened in 2004), and the Museum of the Second World War in Gdańsk (2017) has been drawn, with both exhibitions subjected to analysis in terms of their affiliation with certain memory politics and their spectacular and meaningful design, to show trends and tensions in the field of 'new museums'.

Keywords Polish museum boom, historical museums, memory device, politics of memory, Warsaw Rising Museum, Museum of the Second World War in Gdańsk

Introduction: Polish museum boom. Museums as memory devices

Among the many phenomena of the 'memory boom' in contemporary Poland, the 'museum boom' is of special importance. Its beginnings can be precisely set in space and time: it dates back to 2004, when the spectacular Warsaw Rising Museum, first such institution in Poland, was opened to the public. From then on multiple new institutions of this type have been founded, and several traditional historical museums have rearranged their permanent exhibitions to follow the trend. The boom continues and is not likely to cease (i.e. the Polish History Museum in Warsaw, established in 2006, is to open its permanent exhibition within the next few years). The most recent episode of the series so far was set in Gdańsk, where the Museum of the Second World War (MSWW) was opened to the public on 23 March 2017. The MSWW, the newest of the Polish 'new museums', will be the central topic of this article. I will use it as an example to outline the development of the boom.

A major change in the way the 'new museums' are designed is the shift from educational function (knowledge transmission) to a function that can be defined as experiential (Ziębińska-Witek 2011, 42–51). According to the new perception, the main task of a museum is to produce a powerful and memorable experience for the visitors, through the use of diversified media, making them interact with the exhibition and immerse in the world created within its confines. In this way a historical museum becomes a persuasive tool of memory politics, used with a view to transmitting a particular vision of the past, integrating members of a group and strengthening the sense of identity.

When presenting the 'new museums' as 'memory devices' I refer to Michel Foucault's "apparatus theory" (1980), transferred to and developed in the area of memory studies by Laura Basu, who coined the term "memory *dispositif*" (2011). My intention is to draw on these concepts to propose a term that can be used in investigations of contemporary memory cultures in terms of their complexity, dynamics and politics. I apply the memory device term to the memory research on three general levels (Kobielska 2017): firstly, the whole system of a memory culture can be described as a mega-apparatus in the Foucaultian sense, i.e. a network of power relations or a heterogenous entanglement of various elements used to manage the human subjects, making them remember in particular ways whilst discrediting others. Secondly, the 'memory device' can be understood as a specific fragment of this very network: a set of interrelated elements that produce a certain tendency

of remembering. Thirdly, specific cultural texts, spaces and practices that organise the remembering by encouraging, supporting and modifying mnemonic content for their 'users', are 'memory devices', too. The last variant is essential for the analysis of museums that I discuss in this text.

Thus, my perspective is that of memory research: I discuss museums as memory devices and analyse them as part of the Polish memory culture, in terms of the experience, or memory training, that they create for the visitors. Consequently, I pay more attention to the design of exhibitions and possible ways in which they can be used in the remembering processes than to official museum documents, their strategies, management or organisation, although some of these will be important in the investigation of the Museum of the Second World War.

Museums and politics

After 2004, the Warsaw Rising Museum (WRM) became an impactful model of 'new museums', creating a pattern followed by other Polish museums. Memory shaped within the WRM's exhibition can be described not only with the use of epithets such as *attractive*, *interesting*, *immersive* or *convincing*, but also in terms of politics (Żychlińska and Fontana 2016; Kobielska 2016). From its very beginnings, the museum has been politically linked with the right-wing conservative party Law and Justice (it was promoted by the late Law and Justice president, Lech Kaczyński). It is fully devoted to commemoration of the Warsaw Uprising of 1944, an operation by the Polish resistance Home Army to liberate Warsaw from German occupation, unsupported and lasting over two long months, with a tragic death toll of 200,000; it is therefore not surprising that the museum's narrative concentrates on warfare.

Soldiers of the Home Army are the protagonists and subjects of the WRM's narrative, while civilians appear within its framework as one of its many objects, a collective background character rather than the subject of individual stories of suffering. The museum space is full of young and beautiful faces of insurgents: the exhibition opens with phone boxes where their over 50-year old testimonies can be heard. Their combat is shown in two aspects: as an attractive adventure anyone would like to take part in and as a heroic, yet indispensable duty, maintained by bravery and virtue and rooted in religious faith; an effort that mystically saved the identity of Poland, its

dignity and honour, even if not full independence. The Warsaw Rising Museum would be thus a memory device that supports a rather conservative vision of the past, in which the national identity, patriotism, tradition, religion, military heroism and sacrifice are valued most and in which the Polish national perspective is the default one.

The Museum of the Second World War in Gdańsk has been expected to serve as a "liberal answer" to the WRM, as it was started under the auspices of the centrist government of the Civic Platform party in 2008. After the CP handed over power to the Law and Justice in October 2016, the MSWW (still not opened to the public at that time, but with works on the permanent exhibition heading towards the end) and its management became an object of massive criticism from the part of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage and the pro-government media (Machcewicz 2017). In his statement before the Parliament in May 2016, the Minister of Culture, Piotr Gliński, pronounced that the "speed, determination and generosity of transferring public money" to the MSWW by the previous authorities had been "astounding" and that the shape of the then planned permanent exhibition was "a problem", as it would propose an "universalistic story about the war and the nations involved" instead of "concentrating on the Polish narrative and interpretation of events". "It is the Polish point of view that should be presented in this museum, just like the British point of view is presented in the Imperial War Museum, the German in German museums and the French in French museums. This seems obvious" (Gliński 2016), the Minister concluded.

Several weeks before the aforequoted speech, in April 2016, the Minister of Culture announced that the MSWW would be merged with a newly established institution of 2015 under the name of Museum of Westerplatte and the War of 1939. As the merger marks the formal birth of a new cultural institution, the contract of the hitherto director of the MSWW expires automatically. The MSWW management, the local authorities of Gdańsk and the Polish Ombudsman (Commissioner of Human Rights) tried to prevent the merger at court. They managed to have it delayed enough to let the 'old' museum team open the permanent exhibition in the previously prepared shape to the public on 23 March 2017. Two weeks later, the institutions were merged and a new director, Dr Karol Nawrocki, was appointed by the Minister. Meanwhile, the public success of the MSWW became obvious: by the time of the merger, the exhibition had been visited by 20,000 people, by the end of 2017 – by over 400,000. In 2018, too, it remains steadily popular with visitors. Right

after his nomination, Director Nawrocki announced in the press that the exhibition awaited changes that would show the “Polish contribution to the history” (Nawrocki 2017). Several months later, his reproaches were officially upheld by the Minister, who declared that the exhibition “would be changing little by little” because of its “unacceptable malpractices”; adding that, for financial reasons, the general idea “would not be modified” (Gliński 2017). The very first changes to the exhibition were introduced in autumn 2017 and included adding new elements, modifications of existing elements, removals and replacements. The biggest change, however, involved the final section, where a touching video footage, combining pictures of the 20th-century history with alarming current images of refugees and war victims was replaced with animated film entitled *The Unconquered* (fig. 1, p. 110). The video, extoling the Polish bravery and suffering during the 20th century, was prepared by the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN), the main institution of state politics of memory. In the description below I will mainly focus on the initial shape of the exhibition, as I believe that the history of its modifications needs a separate analysis.

Comparison: Warsaw Rising Museum as a pioneer

Taking all these circumstances into account, a comparison between the Warsaw Rising Museum, the oldest of all Polish ‘new museums’, and the newest one can be informative. As my research shows, the relationship between the two exhibitions is not black and white. Unquestionably, the WRM sets a precedent for its followers in that it prepares the visitors for contact with untraditional space. The exhibition owes its attractiveness to its diversity, interactivity, multisensuality, affectivity and the use of popcultural means. Its suggestive space makes the visitors explore its construction and drives them towards a certain effort of perception and interpretation. Visitors to the Museum of the Second World War, on the other hand, are probably already ‘trained’ in crossing rooms that are designed unconventionally, i.e. require following the labyrinthine visit path and proceeding from text to video, from examining exhibits to searching digital databases, as well as in dealing with and understanding such space. As the WRM introduced many of these solutions, it can be called a ‘pioneer museum’, whose patterns are to a certain extent echoed or emulated. Such echoes are easy to indicate within the MSWW’s exhibition. The similarity of

Fig. 1: Museum of the Second World War, interior, 1 April 2017. Video footage, later removed from the exhibition. © Maria Kobielska

some elements in both museums provoke the treatment of certain MSWW's rooms as references to, or even quotations from, the WRM's exhibition. For instance, in both museums there is a large hall dominated by a plane suspended from the ceiling, filled with cases displaying military equipment, as well as a scenography showing a typical Polish pre-war street at the beginning of the exhibition's story, just to show the most obvious ones.

The exhibition area in the MSWW is over 5,000 square meters (it is most likely the most spacious of all such museums in Poland, including the vast building of the Polin Museum (Musuem of the History of Polish Jews) in Warsaw, and one of the biggest historical museums in the world). The exhibition consists of 18 thematic parts (arranged in three chronological groups: before, during and after the war) and of over 60 separated sections – from tiny rooms and maze-like corridors to huge galleries. The size of the exhibition is striking, it dominates the visitors' first impressions (undoubtedly it would be impossible to see it thoroughly during one visit). It is located underground, which strengthens the visitors' immersion into the overwhelming

Fig. 2: Museum of the Second World War, interior, 1 April 2017. Shocking photos by Julien Bryan. © Maria Kobielska

inner world, separated from the outside. Consequently, the impression of plenitude, completeness of the museum's story, its persuasiveness and attractiveness may be even stronger than in the 'pioneer museum'. The Museum of the Second World War can thus be seen as more than simply the fulfilment of the Warsaw Rising Museum pattern, as it surpasses its ambitions, simultaneously developing some solutions that can be considered controversial or polemic considering the mainstream strategies of Polish historical museums, both in terms of the way the exhibition is organised and of the type of memory it proposes.

Museum of the Second World War: defying the patterns

The strategy of showing 'the shocking' firmly distinguishes the MSWW from other Polish museums. On the one hand, its exhibition is in this respect the most daring and the most difficult to bear. The pictures of violence and death

are fully exposed, which is in opposition to the common tendency to conceal them partially and let visitors decide if they want to see them, for instance, by placing them behind curtains, in boxes or drawers. In the MSWW gruesome, large-scale photographs cover all walls of the galleries, with every single detail visible. Among the numerous examples of such exhibits is the photo showing a frozen corpse of a Soviet soldier in a room devoted to the Winter War with Finland, or pictures by Julien Bryan, who photographed September 1939 in Poland. There is for instance a photo showing a ten-year-old, Kazimiera Mika, kneeling in despair over a bloodstained body of her older sister who has just been shot (fig. 2, p. 111). Equally striking are records of the very moments of executions that can also be found within the exhibition; a disturbing video showing close-ups of mental patients being driven to the place where they would be gassed (during one of the first Nazi "experiments" with this way of killing, in Mogilev in 1941) is one of the most unanticipated materials to see. Nevertheless, as all the most extreme pieces of the exhibition are documents, i.e. archival photographs and films, it is more the authenticity than scare that rules here, making the place represent the poetics of testimony rather than that of a horror.

The MSWW defies the established pattern of showing the war mainly on a battlefield, as a series of purely military events, combats, fighting led by memorable commanders, with a central figure of a soldier-hero. In fact, in the museum the military aspect is somewhat hidden in the exhibition space, which is paradoxical for a museum of war; for instance, descriptions and visualisations of all the battles of the WWII, though very detailed, can only be found in databases accessible to the willing via touchscreens. Two big galleries presenting the course of the war concentrate on soldiers' everyday life and its conditions or on war industry and its impact on the eventual victory, rather than on the situation at the fronts. Civilians become dominant in the narrative; the visitor has no doubt that they are given the floor, especially when reading and listening to their testimonies. While in the Warsaw Rising Museum all the leading witnesses were insurgents, in the Museum of the Second World War there is at least a dozen stands with video testimonies of civilians or other similar audio recordings. Even the excerpts from soldiers' letters that can be heard in the above-mentioned gallery with a plane, weapons and other equipment, are mainly focused on their daily and emotional life and often express discouragement from fighting. Not a single testimony of a famous person from governments or army elite was used. At the same time, biographies of 'ordinary people' are sometimes described very

carefully, as if they were well-known historical figures. For instance, boxes commemorating Józef Stach and Zdzisław Wysocki, two unremarkable, one could think, Poles killed by the Germans in the first years of war, are very much alike those telling the histories of Leni Riefenstahl or Sophie Scholl and Rudolf Cleveringa.

The above-mentioned multitude and opulence of the exhibition is organised, among others, by the akin gesture of integration. People of various nations and citizenships, situations, tragic events and resistance strategies of different times and places are juxtaposed, merged within the exhibition rooms. Their parallel design makes one repeatedly think about similarities in people's experiences: like in the parts concerning displacements, where stories of those deported by the Nazis and by the Soviets, the people expulsed and the Germans who resettled to colonise Eastern Europe mix together, shown in several identically arranged chambers. Such a parallel can also emphasise the link between fates of people from the opposite sides of the front.

While in the WRM the Warsaw Uprising is shown as a crucial event of the German occupation, a milestone in the history of Poland and an exceptional representation of the Polish spirit, in the MSWW it is only a part of a bigger section about all European uprisings, together with the Warsaw ghetto uprising of 1943 and the combats in Paris, Slovakia and Prague. Five uprisings follow one another in an informative presentation displayed on the black screen while the visitor enters the room and, then, in a moving montage of photos and archival videos with quotations from the testimonies in a dark, mysterious projection hall. Nonetheless, the Warsaw Uprising is such an important *lieu de mémoire* in the Polish memory culture that it could not be left non-distinguished; a large glass-case with objects from the fighting Warsaw attracts attention thereto, making the visitor acknowledge its importance. Yet, even with all this, the Warsaw Uprising is made a part of a bigger series, an element of a wider historical context, rather than a unique tragedy of Poland.

The meaning and implications of the juxtapositions described are complex. Firstly, the stories combined are not rivals competing for recognition, attention or commemoration. Hence, they do not represent what Michael Rothberg called a model of "antagonistic" or "competitive" memory (Rothberg 2009). To a certain extent they can be seen as Rothbergian "multidirectional memories" which negotiate, refer to and support each other. Nevertheless, equation rather than comparison may result from that; juxtaposed memories are contextualised, but can also be prevented from revealing different experiences (and traumas) which risk to be unified.

Conclusion

The Museum of the Second World War is often referred to, appreciatively or not, as an anti-war museum, concentrating on its dreadful image. While in the Warsaw Rising Museum war is equally tragic, there is a crucial difference. In the latter the terrible tragedy is a heroic one: it is founded on the extreme merits of those who sacrificed themselves hopelessly, with no chance to achieve their dreams. In the MSWW the war is evil and refers to the horrible, violent change of common everyday life. Also, while in the WRM war was a tragic, but noble past, in the MSWW it involves the present and the future (originally clearly visible in the already mentioned video footage in the final part of the exhibition; the example shows that the modifications introduced to the exhibition may reduce the intensity of the narrative described).

To sum up, in the context of the Polish museum boom, the MSWW must be seen as a particularly complicated memory device. It exploits previous museum patterns (as its mechanisms are partly shared with the predecessors) whilst proposing shifts or revisions, and formulating a certain counter-project of remembering within the Polish memory culture. This perspective, although still based on suffering as the core element of the war story, shows it as a common, trans-national, cruel, violent and useless tragedy of ordinary people. The comparison between the oldest and the newest of the contemporary Polish museums, drawn taking into account the conditions of their activities, shows both the potential of the museum boom and its dependence; dependence on memory patterns and on power relations.

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Anja Petersen

Ingeborg Holm changed the world. An early whistleblower

Abstract The play *Ingeborg Holm*, which later became a silent movie – considered to be Sweden's first social drama on the screen – was written by Nils Krok in Helsingborg 1906. It caused a fierce discussion in Swedish media at the time. *Ingeborg Holm* was a play and a film that questioned some of the ground values in Sweden at the turn of the century. Nils Krok was in that perspective what we might call an early whistleblower. *Ingeborg Holm* is usually not a part of Helsingborg's reproduced grand history.

What matters and what counts when it comes to the history of a town like Helsingborg? What and who on the other hand, is never seen or accounted for? Who has made those choices and why? The stories we produce and reproduce about the past matters. A master narrative is often created in which certain perspectives and people are placed at the fore front, while others are forgotten or left out on purpose. What is remembered, forgotten or hidden? To choose is a political standpoint.

Keywords use of history, master narrative, empowerment, gender, women

All of us sitting on poor relief boards, voting yes and no
on issues relating to other people's fortunes and misfortunes,
ought to read *Ingeborg Holm*
(Ebba Pauli, *Helsingborgs-Posten* 1913).

Ingeborg Holm: A Play in Four Acts (Krok 2008/1906) was written in Helsingborg in 1906, whose main character, Ingeborg Holm, also came to play a role in terms of reforming Swedish legislation. The play was written by Nils Krok (1865–1928) during the week of Easter in 1906 and was about poor relief in Sweden. Krok found contemporary poor relief to be both debilitating and managed in an old-fashioned manner. Poor relief still followed the 1871 poor relief regulation. It was based on the so-called right of the head of the household (the master), which meant unconditional discretion for poor relief boards across the country. Nils Krok argued that it needed to be reformed. Women with children were expected to live on allowances so small that children were forced into begging, people were forced into poorhouses to survive and children were separated from their parents. Nils Krok reflected upon the social utility of this. Would not benefits that kept families together, constitute a better option? The objective of Nils Krok's play was to bring about change and Ingeborg Holm was to be the character who would change the world. However, a woman like Ingeborg Holm was and still is an unusual hero in the official history, or master narrative, of Helsingborg.

A master narrative is a metanarrative presenting an accepted version of what things look like in a location and why this location is said to be the way it is (cf. Brown and Au 2014). In Helsingborg's master narrative, there has not been any room for or interest in theatre or women like Ingeborg Holm. Helsingborg's master narrative is a history about men and the bourgeois middle class. The focus has been on development, business acumen and grandeur. The people who have been put in the spotlight include shipping magnates, industrial tycoons, entrepreneurs and consuls. There is almost an infinite number of events, places and people capable of representing the collective memory of Helsingborg. However, challenging the image of the city's master narrative and representing more than just a peripheral story is hard. Hence, Ingeborg Holm is not part of the master narrative of Helsingborg. She belongs to the large number of rejected or forgotten people in history.

The play was a social drama about a woman, Ingeborg Holm, who has just lost her husband in a lung disease. Left behind is Ingeborg Holm: a widow with a house, a newly opened grocery store with large loans and five

small children, while at the same time being too sick to get a job. Ingeborg Holm was forced to ask the poor relief board for support in order to keep her house and put food on the table. Around the year 1900, women with up to five children were offered 20 kronor per month for food, shelter, clothing and fuel. Ingeborg Holm realized that this assistance would force her to send her children to beg. But there was another option, which the board believed was the best for everyone involved, which was moving into the poorhouse while boarding out her children. Ingeborg did not see any other way out. She moved in and the children were given new homes. At the poorhouse, Ingeborg got sick with grief from missing her children who lived too far away for her to visit them. That is why Ingeborg in the play asked to leave the poorhouse. The board took a vote on her future. Lund, bookkeeper at the poorhouse, said no and emphasized that in addition to Ingeborg Holm not having any skills or anywhere to live, she was well-behaved and a good worker at the poorhouse and that they needed people who could wash the dishes, scrub the floor and look after those who were ill. Maids were hard to get, he pointed out. Furthermore, she would also have difficulties repaying her debt to the poor relief system.

Nils Krok wanted the theatre audience to be affected by the play. The target audience for the play was the Helsingborg bourgeoisie. The ones living in the city able to decide upon and enforce changes, as well as having the means and being able to go and see a play. Visiting the theatre was a cultural event for the upper middle class.

Ingeborg Holm premiered in Helsingborg on 5 November 1906. It was also staged in Gothenburg in 1907 by Victor Sjöström (1879–1960). Author Ebba Pauli (1873–1941) was there and saw the play. She agreed with the play's criticism of the poor relief system.

> From the play (Krok 2008/1906, 102):
> OLSSON: ---Through my work, our poor relief has become real poor relief. No abundance! Our frugality has reduced the poor tax year after year. Isn't that great!

Ebba Pauli also served as secretary of the Swedish Poor Relief Association (*Svenska Fattigvårdsförbundet*), which aimed to change the Swedish poor relief system as it was seen as patriarchal in nature. She reviewed the play *Ingeborg Holm* in the *Swedish Poor Relief Association Magazine* (*Svenska Fattigvårdsförbundets Tidskrift*) (Pauli 1907). Ebba Pauli called upon

members of poor relief boards around the country to go and see the play. She was critical of the poor relief system being so enthusiastic about saving money, as well as of the fact that children were separated from their mothers and placed in foster homes far away. She also found the mixture of people who were poor, ill, elderly and addicts to be problematic.

> From the play (Krok 2008/1906, 61):
> BERG: --- The poor house is the large garbage dump for all the misery in society. Insane people, delirious people, people off the street, both men and women, feeble poor creatures who've worked their whole lives, poor young women who've been deceived, they all gather here and, I assert, corrupt each other. And now you want to bring in a woman, who's done nothing wrong and is still in her youth. You want to board out her children and deprive her of her right, her right as a mother, to she herself govern and raise them. Who is to ensure that she doesn't get her spirit broken by the punishment you want to administer on her?

Despite Ebba Pauli's arguments, the play did not turn into the means for change envisaged by Nils Krok. The play triggered empathy and reflection but no real change. Perhaps this is why Nils Krok re-worked his play into a film script. Film represented a powerful new medium with great potential at the beginning of the twentieth century.

In 1913, Victor Sjöström, who is now seen as one of Sweden's leading filmmakers, was tasked with filming just about anything with famous actress Hilda Borgström (1871–1953), as she had a large number of unused days left in her contract. Victor Sjöström chose to produce *Ingeborg Holm*. As a matter of fact, he had participated in staging the play at the theatre.

The film premiered in Gothenburg in 1913. It was a scandalous success. After the screening in Stockholm, the newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* wrote that several viewers left the cinema due to the unfair allegations raised against the poor relief authorities. The writer claimed that the scenes looked more like a cynical exercise of power and prisons from a century ago than a contemporary poor relief facility. Poor relief inspector Georg Nordfelt criticized the film in a letter to the editor titled "Unwholesome cinematic art" (Nordfelt 1913). He found the film to be unwholesome and objectionable as it depicted conditions in the poor relief system as belonging to a semi-barbaric country and not to Sweden in 1913. Many people criticized the film for being highly excessive. Nils Krok replied that this was not a matter of sinister fiction but

a realistic account. Critics were also concerned with how the outside world would look upon Sweden after a film such as *Ingeborg Holm*.

The debate Nils Krok wanted, and which his play about Ingeborg Holm was a part of, yielded results. In 1918, Sweden got new reformed poor relief legislation. Nils Krok and Ingeborg Holm, together with Victor Sjöström, Hilda Borgström, Ebba Pauli and the film medium, changed Swedish law. *Ingeborg Holm* was the first film to trigger a political debate in Sweden (Hedling 1999, 50). It also received some attention in other European countries and in the United States.

In fact, Nils Krok may be seen as an early whistleblower. Nils Krok was part of both the establishment and the poor relief board he criticized. Through the newspaper articles written in relation to the film, one can get a sense of the difficulties involved in criticizing something you are a part of yourself. In the newspaper *Helsingborgs-Posten*, bookkeeper Munkberg from Helsingborg in 1913 accused Nils Krok of lying and fabricating. Nils Krok did not engage in any discussions, simply maintaining that he did not make things up and that if experts like Ebba Pauli found the events to be realistic and credible, then that must be good enough. Munkberg was a member of the poor relief board together with Krok and participated in the decisions made by the board. He also served as a trustee at the poorhouse. The play's bookkeeper Lund, who also serves as a trustee at the poorhouse, probably refers to bookkeeper Munkberg. Perhaps the charges and harsh criticism levied by bookkeeper Munkberg indicate that he felt singled out as a bookkeeper and trustee.

> From the play (Krok 2008/1906, 110 f.):
> VICKMAN: So, on top of everything, you forcefully keep poor mothers, unwed women and widows, who once saw themselves as having to move here, at the facility. You won't release them until they have paid the last sliver of their debt. And when can it be paid! Poor young women! They yearn for freedom, which is found on the other side of the tall fence.
>
> LUND: Pardon doctor, if I may make a remark! Surely, you're not saying that we should release unwed mothers. In that case, they will return every two years with a new child. We must keep them until they become so old that we have nothing to fear in that respect.

Munkberg was persistent in his claims that what was portrayed in the film never occurred at the Helsingborg poorhouse. He also claimed that no one had been forced into the poorhouse and argued that everyone was free to leave whenever they wanted to. However, the cases in the poor relief board minutes show the opposite. There was no right to appeal a decision. Nor was it feasible to leave the facility on one's own accord. Many women spent their whole working life at the poorhouse without being able to leave. The play about Ingeborg Holm was based on abuses repeated time and time again in the poor relief board minutes.

> From the play (Krok 2008/1906, 108):
> OLSSON: You could say whatever you want, but poor relief works well. It works well, you see. They enjoy a good existence, each and every one who comes here.
>
> VICKMAN: No, unfortunately.
>
> OLSSON: What are you saying?! Is there anyone missing good food and being tended to? Mind your own business as the facility doctor and don't blame others!
>
> VICKMAN: I do not seek to blame any one person but the system itself.
>
> OLSSON: Our system is a damn good system, as it's cheap.
> ---
> VICKMAN: I said that my remarks concern the system. Why should Mrs. Holm be admitted to the facility?
>
> OLSSON: You can't expect me to be able to account for this after so many years. I suppose she was poor and wanted to live here. We don't force anyone.
>
> VICKMAN: Shouldn't she have been given enough assistance in terms of money and being allowed to remain outside the facility, so that she herself would have been able to raise her children?

In 1918, the discussion had reached a point where a change in the legislation comes into effect. According to the new legislation, those applying for assistance had the right to appeal decisions and the previous *meager* relief was now to be *fair* relief. Poorhouses were to be differentiated and older inhabitants were to be moved to retirement homes.

This could be the end of the story about Ingeborg Holm and perhaps that might have been sufficient. The courage to make one's voice heard can make a difference. By means of theatre and film, people were able to bring about change. Ingeborg Holm had implications, not only in Helsingborg but in Sweden as a whole as well as the rest of the world. The film is still screened and discussed today, and it is available on Youtube. However, in the master narrative of Helsingborg, it does not hold a place.

If Ingeborg Holm in fact represented a realistic portrayal of the poor relief system in Helsingborg, it should be possible to find out who Ingeborg Holm really was. When looking over the board minutes, I directed my searchlight towards the widows. There were many unfortunate circumstances, difficult situations and sad events surrounding the widows applying for assistance. But no one fit in with the play. I found no widow from a lower middle-class background with five children to be boarded out. It is possible that Nils Krok felt obliged to change the details about his main character in order to offer a better fit for the middle-class audience at the theatre; to create the possibility to identify and emphasize with the main character, but also to create a feeling that this could happen to anyone. Thus, I started over, from April 1906 and backward, and read about *all* women applying for assistance from the board.

In the fall of 1905, a middle-aged woman stands in front of the poor relief board. Her name is Maria Persson and she is presented as "Admitted unwed Maria Persson" (HBG sa 1905, 4). Maria Persson wishes to leave the facility and claims to be able to contribute with 10 kronor a month for the raising of her children. As it were, Maria Persson has given birth to five children out of wedlock, three of which still were boarded out by the poor relief system.

The board takes a vote concerning her life. Seven votes against six decide that mother of five Maria Persson should remain at the facility. There is no right to appeal. "The woman shall presently and until further notice remain within the facility" (HBG sa 1905, 4). The reason was that Maria Persson would never be able to pay off her burdensome debt, which increased each year she used the poor relief system. The longer she was forced to stay, the larger the debt. It was more profitable for the city if Maria Persson remained at the poorhouse and worked off her debt. Furthermore, good maids were difficult to come by.

In the case of Maria Persson, elementary school teacher Krok and building contractor Andersson dissented against the decision in writing. This was the only time Krok publicly stated his dissatisfaction. Is it possible that Maria Persson is Nils Krok's Ingeborg Holm? She also had five children and the

procedure and discussions are similar. But Maria Persson was not a widow, she had not lived a seemingly orderly life and she had five children out of wedlock. She did not own a grocery store and was instead referred to as an unwed maid.

Nils Krok offered harsh criticism of the poor relief system, both in play and film, which took away the rights of poor people. He criticized a system that separated children from their parents and removed people's ability to act. Creating a debate on the basis of Maria Persson would probably have been difficult. From this perspective, the widow Holm represented a more suitable choice.

Maria Persson is admitted into the poorhouse already in 1893. This is the same year that Nils Krok takes his seat on the poor relief board. Maria Persson is 23 years old, in an advanced stage of pregnancy and has a small child to take care of. Perhaps she was unable or not well enough to work due to her pregnancy. In addition, it would probably have been difficult or even impossible for her to keep or get a job having one child and about to give birth to a second. She applied for assistance in front of the poor relief board. That very same day, she moved into the poorhouse and her three-year-old son Carl Emil was boarded out. Maria Persson also had a previous son, Edvard. He was six years old and was already boarded out when Maria moved to the facility.

Two weeks later, Maria Persson gave birth to her daughter Anna Sofia. Maria Persson and Anna Sofia lived together in the poorhouse for almost a year before the daughter was boarded out. Two years later, in 1895, Maria Persson gave birth to a son (Edvin) in the poorhouse. In 1900, she had another son, Axel Ferdinand. According to the poor relief board, Maria Persson had led an immoral life outside the poorhouse, which would be prevented as she was admitted. However, this did not lead to the expected results. Maria Persson lost contact with her children. They lived too far away, in spite of the fact that the poor relief board stated that children should be boarded out in the surrounding area.

Anna Sofia ended up with the Jönssons in Allerum together with another foster daughter. The couple did not have any children of their own. Edvard lived in Kvistofta with the Berggrens and another foster son. They did not have any children of their own either. When Edvard completed his church confirmation in 1902, he was seen as an adult and the assistance from the poor relief system ended. However, Edvard remained with his foster family and was recorded as the young man Edvard Berggren. He had taken the

surname of his foster family. Did Maria Persson ever find out what happened to her children? Did she ever meet them again? It is rare that anyone shows any interest in women like Maria Persson or tells their story. In a master narrative, single mothers are rarely afforded a prominent place. Nor are their children.

Maria Persson remained locked up for 18 years without having committed any crime, without having been convicted and without the right to appeal. For 18 years, she worked six days a week for the city while still creating an insurmountable debt that meant that she was unable to leave her prison. She applied to the board to leave a number of times. On 1 May 1905, she stood in front of the board and asked to move out: "the request by unwed Maria Persson to leave the facility was tabled until next meeting" (HBG sa 1905). However, at the next meeting, the board was quiet, and at the next, and the next. It was not until October that Maria was informed that she would not be allowed to leave the poorhouse. In fact, Maria Persson had to wait until 1911 before she was allowed to leave the facility. She was then 51 years old. Her children had all been confirmed and were seen as adults. The poor relief system no longer paid out any assistance to the foster families for taking care of them.

In 1941, Maria Persson is admitted to a retirement home, 81 years old. The retirement home was located in the same building as the old poorhouse where she had spent 18 years of her life. In the register, she is now referred to as *Miss* rather than the stigmatized term *unwed*. The very next year, in 1942, Maria's daughter Anna Sofia also moved into the retirement home. Anna Sofia was only 49 years old. In practice, many old age homes still operated as poorhouses. They therefore spent Maria's last year in life as well as Anna Sofia's first year in life together, at the same institution. Did they know that they lived there at the same time? Did they know that they were mother and daughter? Did Anna Sofia know that she had lived there as a newborn? Maria Persson died of heart failure in the winter of 1943, 83 years old. Anna Sofia stayed at the home until she passed away in 1976.

By extension, the lives of Maria Persson, Anna Sofia and the other children, and their experiences when encountering Swedish poor relief, resulted in changes in the Swedish legislation. But who could have known? Most likely least of all Maria Persson herself. Widows, single mothers and children are rarely part of the master narrative of a location. However, if the Helsingborg master narrative requires success and significance, then Ingeborg Holm and Maria Persson definitely ought to be a part of it.

Stories, such as the one about Ingeborg Holm and Maria Persson, enable us to reflect upon whose voices are heard, which processes and perspectives are presented or re-presented in a city's master narrative. Which roles are assigned to people in our own use of history and why? What do we remember, what is forgotten or hidden? Choosing which stories, events and people to present is a political standpoint. But so is choosing which ones not to present.

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Michael Terwey

Collection management and public consent: The practice, politics and perception of collections disposal and transfer

Abstract It is taken as axiomatic among museum professionals that curators must actively shape collections through the processes of acquisition, de-accession, disposal, and transfer. However, these processes are not well understood by the public as a whole, by politicians, or by policy-makers.

In 2016 the National Science and Media Museum took the decision to transfer parts of its photographic collections to the Victoria and Albert Museum. While the decision was justified by the museum in terms of professional practice, the subsequent public controversy and political response suggests that these arguments did not convince the public.

Using an analysis of the public and political responses to the decision as a starting point and drawing on other examples of de-accessioning, this paper explores the gap between the public and professionals. It argues that museum professionals can build public consent for their actions and maintain public trust in their institutions.

Keywords de-accessioning, photography, policy, art, science

Museum face a crisis of sustainability. For every object that we dispose of, we acquire another thousand. And, all the while, the financial costs of maintaining collections continue to rise, and the environmental impacts are better understood by the day.

While curators and museum professionals generally accept disposal and transfer of museum collections as legitimate and necessary, for the public it remains highly controversial, particularly then the motivation for disposal is financial. Numerous examples abound: just last year there was controversy over the move by the Berkshire Museum in Pittsfield Massachusetts (Moynihan 2018) to sell 40 Norman Rockwell paintings to boost their endowments, and, in the UK, the National Railway Museum has been criticised for the transfer of a locomotive to another railway museum (Steel 2017).

Most museums are public institutions; even if we don't depend on public funding, we do depend on public consent for our activities. If we are going to address the challenge of creating sustainable museum collections, we need to build public support for disposal. This will involve addressing the large gaps that exist between the public understanding of museums and that of us professionals.

This gap in understanding became particularly clear for me over the last two years, as my own museum, the National Science and Media Museum in Bradford, was criticised for a decision to transfer a large collection to another UK National Museum – the Victoria and Albert or V&A Museum in London. We believed that we were making a brave decision, in the public interest, to rationalise our collections and focus resources on core science and technology collections – in line with a change in the museum's strategy and response to significant funding cuts from the UK government. Our critics – who included politicians, photographers and members of the public – disagreed and thought the decision was flawed and indefensible.

In this short paper I want to explore this experience, and what might be learned from it and so I will be writing mainly about collections and about the processes of disposal and transfer. However, I think there are broader lessons for museums making difficult decisions of all kinds, which require us to understand, and bridge, similar gaps between museums and the public.

The National Science and Media Museum was established in 1983 in Bradford – an industrial city in the north of England. Originally named the National Museum of Photography, Film and Television, the institution acquired the Royal Photographic Society (RPS) when the society, which is the world's oldest organisation dedicated to photography, no longer felt that the

maintenance and management of its historic collections were congruent with their current mission or their financial resources. Put simply, they couldn't afford to keep it anymore. The museum purchased the collection with public funding from several different sources, saving it from either being sold to a private collector or being broken-up into different parts and sold piecemeal. And in 2003 it was moved from the headquarters of the RPS in Bath to Bradford where it became part of much larger collection of photographic materials.

In 2012, and partly in response to significant reductions in funding from the UK government following the election of a conservative-led coalition government in 2010, the Museum embarked on a programme of strategic change that repositioned the museum a primarily interested in science and technology, rather than art and cultural production. These changes included staffing restructures, proposals for new galleries, a change to exhibition and learning programmes, a new brand, and a review of collections. The collection review identified bodies of material where the expected cost of cataloguing and digitisation far exceeded the benefit to the museum of using those collections – generally ones that fell outwith the core focus on science and technology. These included a large collection of television adverts, which were transferred to the British Film Institute, and the RPS collection, which we assessed as more in line with the V&A's approach to photography than ours.

Immediately following the public announcement of the move in January 2016 there was loud, serious and sustained criticism of the move (Jordison 2016; Lowson 2016).

We had anticipated opposition, but were not prepared for the intensity or the scale of the opposition that ensued. The criticism, although not always coherent, centred on two main themes – the charge that we were moving to London cultural collections that belonged in the north, and problem of distinguishing between, to put it crudely, 'art' and 'science' in photographic materials and practices. While we took the criticism seriously, and underwent a full review of the decision, our board decided to proceed with the transfer on the grounds that it was the right one for the museum and for the collection.

Museums rarely come into the public consciousness – they are nice places for a day out, but the average person does not think about museums much at all. As the criticism that we received manifest itself on social media, campaigning petitions, and public statements from a wide range of people, it creates a fascinating snapshot of attitudes towards museums, collections, and disposal (direct quotes from social media users, 2016):

> More treasures being packed up and shipped down south.
>
> I am concerned that this national museum outside London is being stripped of its assets.
>
> That the Royal Photography Society's world-renowned photography is to be shipped off to London raises serious concerns that the museum is being downgraded by stealth.
>
> You are nicking all our stuff. Stop down grading the national media centre, we want our stuff back.

Important stuff. Treasures. Assets. Asset-stripping. There are just a few of the expressions and phrases that were used on social media platforms to describe the situation, and they are telling. To think of collections as an asset is to cast a museum as a business, and to think of its value as principally financial. A business is literally defined and valued as a sum of its assets; therefore, the museum is valued for the holding of collections alone. To define a collection's transfer as "asset stripping", implies an act of managerial vandalism that leaves the organisation weaker and less able to function. This section of the public regards museums as repositories for high-value, high-status material culture, which in turn bestow their status on the institution that holds them.

I struggle with this. It feels to me rather like some nineteenth century museums, where the stolen art from subjugated peoples or defeated countries were displayed for the expressed purpose of projecting power, status, and prestige. This is reinforced by another recurring trope in our criticism: that the transfer is indicative of a "downgrading" of the museum.

This concern is particularly illuminating, as it shows clearly that from this standpoint the value of the collection is intrinsic. What the museum may or may not do with it is irrelevant; simply holding it in its stores is a guarantor of the museum's status.

While we should be careful not to over-generalise, and bear in mind that many of these people have never had a conversation with a museum professional in their lives, it feels to me like the kinds of attitude that I heard from the most old-fashioned curators when I started work in museums around 2001, and that persists in more conservative parts of our sector.

Most of us today, however are increasingly thinking of our collections and our institutions in different ways. We understand there is a balance between

the intrinsic value or significance of an object and the opportunities for using it for research or for display. We know that dusty, un-catalogued, un-photographed objects in dark cupboards are not valuable to us, but are actually taking up space that could be used for something more useful. And we also understand collections as complex things, accumulated over time by our all too fallible predecessors.

Even so, curators have traditionally been reluctant to dispose of material, to refine and shape our collections. Nick Merriman, former Director of the Manchester Museum, has argued powerfully that museums must address what he describes as the 'taboo' around disposal (Merriman 2008):

> If we begin to see museum collections as historically contingent and partial… this frees us up to take our own responsibility for active stewardship of collections rather than feeling that the role of the curator is simply to accept their predecessors' decisions which have to be preserved intact for an indefinable posterity.

But the legitimacy for curatorial action, in public museums, ultimately stems from the public – we are only as 'free' to act as we have public consent to do so.

We can think of there as being various sources of consent for a decision to dispose of a collection. Formally, we seek approval from the governance structure of the museum; as well as from the guardians of professional ethics (in the UK, this role is played by the Museums Association). In other controversial cases of disposal approval has not necessarily been gained from both sources. In 2014, for example, Northampton Museums sold an Egyptian statue from its collections to fund expansion of the museum buildings. While approved by the local authority, the museum lost its accredited status – effectively ostracising it from the professional community (Kendall 2014; Johnston 2014).

However, our recent experience suggests that these two sources are, in and of themselves, inadequate. Our actions in relation to the RPS collection were thoroughly consistent with professional ethics, in line with best practice, authorised (twice) by governance boards at both museums and endorsed by the Secretary of State. And yet it is clear from the reaction to our decision that general consent from the public was absent.

Perhaps this should not surprise us. After all, trust in professional expertise exercised 'on behalf of' the public, is under pressure across all fields from

medicine to science to politics. In the UK, in the aftermath of our recent referendum, a senior politician remarked "the people of this country have had enough of experts…saying that they know what is best, and getting it consistently wrong": a quote that has come to epitomise the new populist mood.

So, therefore, how we seek approval from that third source of legitimacy? How do we bridge the gap in understanding between professional practice and public understanding? Unfortunately, I don't think there are easy answers here, but there might be ways that we can start to build more constructive conversations around tough decisions.

Firstly, we can think about how we structure all our public and stakeholder communications. Many museums are finding innovative ways to expand and extend their networks of stakeholders and communities, and using consultative or participation methodologies to involve many more people in decision-making than before. This is challenging and can create inconsistencies: I have sat in consultation meetings with community partners who took a fundamentally different political stance than that taken by the board. But, done well, it can create dialogue and mutual understanding about difficult issues.

Secondly, we should think about whether we're using our communications and interactions with the public to present a real picture of museum practice, or to sustain a fantasy Indiana Jones world of supernaturally knowledgeable curators, and stores brimming with gleaming treasures. Certainly, we very easily allow ourselves to be photographed with white gloves, reverently gazing at a gleaming object in a darkened store. I've done this personally around four times this year. What if, rather than confirming prevailing attitudes to collections and to curatorial expertise, we confounded them? What if we were more open about what we don't know about objects, as what we do know? What if we began to say publicly how much it's going to cost to catalogue, digitise, repack, and store properly every object in our collections, rather than keep this to ourselves? If we're open and honest about our challenges, maybe we might find it easier to build the support to address them.

There is an expression in English: laws are like sausages – no one wants to know how they're made. In democracies, of course, we need to know how our laws are made, and maybe museums are the same. But if we want to ensure that the public carries on supporting museums, particularly when we must make difficult decisions, then perhaps we should be find ways show exactly how, and why, the sausages get made the way that they do.

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Solveig Hanusardóttir Olsen

A bloody practice

Pilot whale hunt in the National Gallery of the Faroe Islands

Abstract The purpose of this article is to illuminate some of the issues that arise when a museum exhibits a work of art which some people would consider politically incorrect. The preceding case is a painting of a pilot whale hunt from 1944 by the artist Sámal Joensen Mikines. It is on display in the permanent collection at the National Gallery of the Faroe Islands. Pilot whale hunt is a very old practice on the Faroe Islands, which has received criticism from abroad over the last couple of decades, going so far that even cultural heritage has been vandalized. This is something that the museum needs to take into consideration, and therefore when the critique and number of foreign guests is at its highest, the painting is taken down due to security reasons. Taking a painting down because of its motif is a moral dilemma and the decision rests on a balance between the security issue and the aim of being a democratic museum.

Keywords fine art, pilot whale hunt, culture, critique, vandalism

1. Introduction

A painting by the Faroese artist Sámal Joensen Mikines depicting whale hunting is on display at the National Gallery of the Faroe Islands. Pilot whale hunting is an old practise on the islands, and for the last couple of decades this has caused a stir abroad. There have been several campaigns, demonstrations and activist groups condemning the hunt, and some of the critique has affected cultural heritage. This is something that the National Gallery of the Faroe Islands needs to take into consideration when displaying the dramatic painting.

The article addresses this difficult issue and puts some of the museums thoughts and measures into words. Firstly the background of Faroese art history, the role of Mikines and his paintings of pilot whale hunt will be introduced. This is followed by the art historical importance and references in the painting. After this the dilemma of displaying a painting of pilot whale hunt will be described. This is both an interesting and difficult issue to address, and the role of the museum has to be taken into consideration. As a cultural institution a museum can play a special role as intermediary of a difficult subject. But the question is at what cost. The museum has to measure the advantages and disadvantages to make the most sensible decision for the safety of the artwork, the selection offered the guests and the representation of Faroese art.

2. Faroese art history, Mikines and pilot whale hunt

From a historical viewpoint, fine arts in the Faroe Islands are quite a modern phenomenon. It is not until the late 1930s that Faroese art reaches a high level; artists travel abroad, educate themselves and are able to live of their art. From this point in time, art on the islands developed so greatly that less than thirty years later one can speak of a distinctive, national mode of expression (Wivel 2011, 375). The National Gallery of the Faroe Islands has a comprehensive collection where it is possible to experience some of the best art the Faroe Islands have to offer. There are around 130 artworks on display in the permanent exhibition, all by Faroese artists or artists who have a connection to the islands.

When entering the permanent exhibition the first large room is dedicated to the father of Faroese art Sámal Joensen Mikines (1906–79). Mikines is considered to be the founder of the modern Faroese art movement, giving

Faroese art its own name. As his surname indicates, the artist came from Mykines, the westernmost island in the Faroese Archipelago. Mikines studied at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen from 1928–32. Apart from stays in the Faroe Islands, he lived and worked in Denmark most of his life.

With his pioneering works in Expressionist art, Mikines portrays Faroese life and nature with emphasis on melancholia, pain, seriousness and nature. His paintings show life in a traditional Faroese society from a historical viewpoint. Primarily he paints landscapes and people on his home islands. Sixteen paintings are on display in the permanent collection at the moment: several landscapes and portraits, a Biblical motif, people in grief and two paintings depicting an old practice on the Faroe Islands, namely pilot whale hunt. One painting is from 1942 and a preparation for paintings to come. The other painting is from 1944 and quite large in size, on loan from the Faroese Parliament.

Around 800 long-finned pilot whales are slaughtered annually on the Faroe Islands. The practice is deemed sustainable, as this is 0.1% of the population. The hunts are non-commercial and organized on a community level. Many Faroese people consider the pilot whale hunt as an important part of their food culture and history. Records of pilot whale hunts date back to 1584. During the cut of a pilot whale's spine its main arteries also get cut. Because of this, the blood colours the surrounding sea red. Anti-whaling groups often use these vivid images in their campaigns against the hunt. The blood-red sea can have a shocking effect on people.

All this drama and monumentality has been an inspiration for Faroese artists for decades. Just like the slaughter itself can induce a reaction, the scene reproduced in an artwork can be shocking. Especially Mikines' painting of the pilot whale hunt from 1944 is quite dramatic. This is something the National Gallery has to take into consideration. These considerations will be discussed later in the article. First the importance of the artwork will be explained, and thereby why the museum has such a dramatic painting on display.

3. The importance of the painting

3.1 Background

When Mikines finished his art degree, he moved back to the Faroe Islands. In 1938 Mikines returned to Copenhagen, presumably because he felt isolated on the islands and missed an artistic and metropolitan environment.

Mikines' paintings had been well received and positively reviewed in Copenhagen (Jákupsson 2007, 36). He probably had the intention of travelling to the Faroes in the summertime to paint the landscape, his favourite subject matter. However, World War II came in the way. The Faroe Islands were occupied by British troops and Denmark was occupied by German troops, and all communication between the two countries was severed. Mikines' stay in Copenhagen turned into a long exile (ibid.).

It was then Mikines started to paint pilot whale hunts. According to Faroese artist Bárður Jákupsson this was to become his most important motif (ibid.). Throughout the years he painted a lengthy series of whale hunts and slaughter. To a large extent, the practice is a theme of death. Mikines was not fond of the blood bath, but he said the drama, battle, colours, compositions, contradictions and the movement fascinated him (ibid.).

3.2 Inspiration

These paintings of struggle are an important part of the search for a personal and a cultural identity. Mikines started painting these dramatic motifs during a world war. The Faroe Islands have never experienced war in the same way as mainland Europe has. The British occupation was met by a wish for friendly relations by the Faroese government. Even though it was a situation of war, Faroese people mainly heard and read about the drama happening around the world. Mikines was living in Copenhagen at this time, experiencing war in a different way. He was closer to the drama in mainland Europe and he was isolated from his family and home country. The situation was put into perspective when he thought about what kind of dramatic events played out on the Faroe Islands. The country does not have any grand, historical masterpieces like the ones that can be found in museums all around Europe. To create a link to art history, and to compare the world situation to a Faroese context, Mikines painted Faroese versions of grand battle scenes. Instead of war, he portrayed pilot whale hunting. The hunt can be said to be one of the most dramatic events on the islands, and these paintings can be seen as Faroese versions of older, grand war and battle paintings. Mikines viewed whale killing as a Faroese struggle to stay alive.

Mikines was the first Faroese artist who painted whaling. Therefore he had to figure out how to approach the motif. He found parts of his inspiration in Early Renaissance. Whilst studying Mikines saw a reproduction

of one of the paintings of *The Battle of San Romano* by the Italian master Paolo Uccello, painted around the 1450s. Uccello's series of three paintings celebrates Florence's victory over Sienese forces in 1432 showing a group of soldiers in armour with lances riding horses. In Uccello's painting the lances play a special role in creating static, linear lines in the composition. Mikines uses the whalers' spear-like weapons to create the same effect. Instead of armour the men are wearing woollen knitted jumpers and Faroese hats. And instead of horses, Mikines paints whales. Just like the painting by Uccello, this is a battle between life and death. The whales are large and strong, the boats can capsize, and the tension is fierce: this is a hazardous situation.

Mikines painted pilot whale hunting throughout his career, developing the subject in different ways. The inspiration from Uccello was forming and crucial for creating a foundation for a subject no Faroese artist had painted before. The inspiration is evident in the paintings up until the middle of the 1940s. Mikines developed as an artist, World War II ended, and the hunt became modernized. These factors changed the motif. In the earlier paintings Mikines emphasizes the drama and battle of the hunt. There is a respect for the hunt and prey where one can see an organized group of whalers standing face front in battle with the catch. The later paintings focus more on the slaughter itself. Blood red sea where it can be hard to distinguish between the hunter and prey (Ingólfsson 2006, 156). The earlier paintings have a stronger visual drama, one being the painting from 1944 at the National Gallery of the Faroe Islands (fig. 1, p. 140).

Classic, grand paintings depicting war or battle scenes can be found in excess throughout the world. It can be argued that museum guests are to some extent used to seeing these motifs and they do not cause a reaction of outrage or the alike. Most of these artworks are older paintings depicting historical battles. Even though Mikines' goal was to mediate the same kind of drama, the situation is different. The painting is only around 75 years old, the pilot whale hunt is a living practice, and this is not a part of the general consciousness.

4. The dilemma

4.1 The museum and the guests

As is evident, Mikines is an important artist in a Faroese context, and the paintings of pilot whale hunts play a special role in Mikines' oeuvre. Therefore

it is imperative that the artist and his art are properly represented in the permanent collection at the National Gallery of the Faroe Islands.

Pilot whale hunting is a difficult subject matter, and the museum experiences this in different ways. Around half of the museum's guests are foreigners. The painting of pilot whale slaughter is one of the first artworks they see in the collection. Most often the guests do not react openly when seeing this painting, but occasionally it happens that a guest vocalizes his or her discontentedness with being confronted with this dramatic and bloody painting.

The museum has made various initiatives to greet discontentedness in the best manner. Firstly the custodians are trained to deal with this kind of feedback by engaging in a constructive dialogue. On one hand there are the subjective truths of the individual guest that the museum needs to take into consideration. Here the museum employees need to project a more objective truth. If necessary the guests are offered to talk to the management. Secondly there is a pamphlet next to the painting with a short text about the art historical importance and the pilot whale hunt in Faroese, Danish and English.

4.2 Risk of damage

For the past five years these initiatives have not been considered to be sufficient for the safety of the painting. In co-operation with the employees, the director of the museum has chosen to put the artwork into storage in the main tourist season. For security reasons and due to the risk of damage the painting has been taken down from late May to early October.

Criticism is something the museum manages on a day-to-day basis. But vandalism is another situation. There are several examples of sabotage of cultural heritage sites to protest whaling on the Faroe Islands, and this plays an important role for the paintings whereabouts. Two examples are Skansin, an old fortress in Tórshavn, and the statue of the Little Mermaid in Copenhagen.

The Little Mermaid is an iconic bronze statue from 1913 by Edvard Eriksen, displayed at Langelinie in Copenhagen, Denmark. It is based on the fairy tale by Danish author Hans Christian Andersen. In recent decades it has become a popular target for defacement by vandals and political activists. On 30 May 2017 the statue was found drenched in red paint with the message "Denmark defend the whales of the Faroe Islands" written on the ground in front of the statue (Jenkins 2017).

Skansin is a historic fortress from the 1580s built to protect against pirate raids. It was expanded in 1780, and during World War II the fort served as a military base for the British soldiers. Skansin is a popular attraction for both locals and tourists. In August 2016 parts of the area were vandalised with graffiti using bad language about whaling and the Faroe Islands. Some of this could be washed away and painted over, but there was also made irreparable damage to one of the old houses (Bertholdsen 2016).

4.3 Ethical issues

A painting at the National Gallery of the Faroe Islands can easily become a target for a political statement protesting the pilot whale hunt. Because of this the museum needs to take precautions. The museum faces several dilemmas in doing this. A museum is a democratic place where subjects can be discussed through art. Stefan Bohman from ICOM Sweden had an introduction to the conference theme *Difficult Issues* for the ICOM International Conference in Helsingborg, Sweden in September 2017. In his introduction he discussed four pitfalls for museums when dealing with difficult issues: full account, omitting, double bookkeeping and minimizing (see p. 24). These four dilemmas can be used to illuminate the National Gallery of the Faroe Islands' situation from different angles.

Firstly Bohman spoke about the challenge to give the full account of something. In this present situation it is impossible to tell the whole story. The museum needs to choose what to write and exhibit. In this context the focus is on Mikines and his art. As explained there are pamphlets where the guests can read more about the matter, but the space is limited and it is impossible to discuss the advantages and disadvantages, criticism, historical aspect, artistic aspect etc. as well as raise ethical questions on such a limited format. The story about pilot whale hunting in the Faroe Islands belongs somewhere else – perhaps in the National History Museum, a special exhibition or in a debate.

There is also a risk in presenting the subject in two different ways. One for the guests visiting the museum, without addressing the difficult issue, and one for people who have a special interest where the difficult issue is addressed, e.g. in books, articles or on the website. This means that the difficult issue is only offered to people who seek further information about the

Fig. 1: Mikines, Sámal Joensen (1944) Pilot Whale Hunt.
[Oil on canvas] 157 x 190 cm. ©National Gallery of the Faroe Islands, Tórshavn.

subject. This is not the case with Mikines' painting of whale killing. Everyone has equal access to the material about the painting.

The National Gallery of the Faroe Islands can be blamed for omitting the difficult issue when storing the painting in the main season. It can be argued that the museum chooses to ignore a certain subject matter even if it can contribute with an artistic viewpoint. It would be easier to store the painting and not have it on display at all. But if doing so, the museum omits an important part of Mikines' artistic oeuvre because the artwork is too demanding to exhibit. Here the museum must weigh very clearly between the advantages and disadvantages of displaying the painting in the permanent exhibition. Only when the artwork is in higher risk of vandalism compared to the importance of having it on display, is it advisable to take it down.

The difficult issue can also be presented in the museum in a minimized way, e.g. in a remote corner or as cold facts without discussing the underlying

Fig. 2: Mikines, Sámal Joensen (1942) Pilot Whale Hunt.
[Oil on canvas] 79 x 110 cm. ©National Gallery of the Faroe Islands, Tórshavn.

issues or presenting another, less difficult version. The dramatic artwork by Mikines is taken down, but the other, smaller, less dramatic one is kept on display. This is a form of minimizing the issue at hand. Instead of showing the final painting as well as the preparation, the museum chooses to take the more dramatic down. This can be interpreted as a form of censorship. But again here one needs to take into account the risk of vandalism compared to the benefits of displaying the painting.

4.4 Security measures

Even though the museum can be accused of omitting and minimizing the issue, two of the four pitfalls, one has to ask oneself why the museum chooses to put the painting in storage. The answer to this is solely due to security

reasons. The museum management considers the painting being high risk of vandalism compared to other artworks, and therefore it is taken down.

The earlier painting of pilot whale hunt from 1942 is part of the permanent collection all year round (fig. 2, p. 141). Thereby the motif is represented, guests can experience the motif and employees can use this in their work and presentations. Still, this is a compromise because this painting is a preparation, it is not as dramatic as the one from 1944 and it is much smaller. It can be described as a milder version of the motif.

The museum could choose to put the painting from 1944 behind glass, mark the area around it or have a museum guard present when necessary. But the museum does not wish to put extra focus on the artwork by increasing the security around the artwork and thereby singling it out and emphasizing the subject matter. Most of the guests do not seem to mind it or keep it to themselves. People have very different opinions, and the challenge is to figure out if these opinions could be a threat or not.

The museum aims to show a wide, representative and good selection of Faroese art. This goal is compromised when one of the artworks is taken down for security measures. Museums have the power and responsibility of making difficult stories easier to understand and to give an insight to a foreign culture through the language of art. The National Gallery of the Faroe Islands is very much aware of this and hosts special exhibitions, events, dialogues, concerts etc. which explain, interact with, contribute or discuss the art. The difficult dilemma is to balance between when the security issue overweighs the aim to be a democratic museum. This is a grave decision, which the management in the museum needs to take in an earnest degree.

5. Conclusion

There is a kind of pride attached to the old practice of hunting pilot whales for the Faroese people. It is an old practice open to all, organized on a community level and regulated by national laws. The slaughter itself is bloody and can be dramatic to witness. The hunt gives rise to various forms of criticism – some of which hit harder than others. Cultural heritage has been vandalized, e.g. with the Little Mermaid in Copenhagen and Skansin in Tórshavn. This has caused the National Gallery of the Faroe Islands to take measures and store the dramatic painting of pilot whale hunt from 1944 by Mikines. In doing this, the museum compromises on some of its tasks.

Museums have the power of making difficult stories easier to understand, to give an insight to a foreign culture, and this is compromised when the painting is taken down. So should the fear of vandalism control what is exhibited and not? The ideal answer is of course no, but reality is more complex. The museum is also responsible for protecting its art for both present and future. It seems that up until today the best way of doing this – finding the balance between risk and responsibility – is to store the painting of the pilot whale hunt in the summer season.

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Artworks

Mikines, Sámal Joensen (1942) *Pilot Whale Hunt.* [Oil on canvas] 79x110 cm. National Gallery of the Faroe Islands, Tórshavn.

Mikines, Sámal Joensen (1944) *Pilot Whale Hunt.* [Oil on canvas] 157x190 cm. National Gallery of the Faroe Islands, Tórshavn.

Uccello, Paolo (probably c. 1438–1440) *Niccolò Mauruzi da Tolentino at the Battle of San Romano.* [Egg tempera with walnut oil and linseed oil on poplar] 182x320 cm. National Gallery, London.

Uccello, Paolo (n.d. c. 1435–1455) *Niccolò Mauruzi da Tolentino unseats Bernardino della Ciarda at the Battle of San Romano.* [Tempera on wood] 182x320 cm. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.

Uccello, Paolo (c. 1455) *The Counterattack of Michelotto da Cotignola at the Battle of San Romano.* [wood panel] 182x317 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris.

Peter Ostritsch, Diana Chafik

Collecting outside the comfort zone – some examples from the field

Abstract How can museums – regulated and influenced by public discourse, politics and their own history – find ways of defining and handling difficult issues? We argue that both defining difficult issues and the ways of coping with those can be approached by a museum's clearly formulated, open-minded vision. Initially, we will show how and what Sörmlands museum is collecting, how it is presenting its collections, and in what respect collecting and presenting are results of the museum's vision. Secondly, taking the vision as a starting point, we will introduce some of the 'difficult'[1] social topics, sub-topics and objects the museum decided to discuss, collect, present and preserve. However, here we will merely give a descriptive outline of some of the cases which we have been working on in the field and not place the examples within a wider theoretical frame.

The different difficult topics that we are working on include(d), among others, displacement, migration, and exile. The documentations and stories are new at the museum in different ways and in some aspects they have never been told or collected before. Finally, returning to the museum's vision, we will argue for a mindset that focuses more on (individual's) narratives than on objects themselves.

Keywords museum collections, narrating, field-work, minorities, migration, ethics

1 With 'difficult' we mean issues or topics that pose moral/ethical questions, and/or have risen from or might raise political debates, and/or are on – at least until recently – rather unusual 'territory' for museums, and/or should be approached by personal with pedagogical and/or ethnographic experience.

Sörmlands museum – its visible and narrating storages and its vision

Sörmlands museum is a regional museum of cultural history situated in Nyköping, a coastal city one hour south of Stockholm. The bulk of our collections are from the 19th and 20th century with focus on the everyday life of all social classes. We also have archeological material and several hundred objects of art. We are working with a holistic approach to defining our collections, i.e. the documents in our archives and our photographic collection are just as much part of the whole collections as are our three dimensional objects.

Since 2017, we are in the process of installing a new museum in Nyköping which will house both offices, exhibition halls, and our complete collections. The main part of the collections will be displayed in visible storage. However – and this is its main characteristic – not organized along material or object categories but around the people and their personal stories that we have collected. We will reunite sub-collections that once arrived (and still regularly arrive) at the museum as a unit of several different objects (including documents and photographs) telling the story of (a) concrete individual(s), but were separated because of their different material aspects or forms. Our aim is not to present 'dead' and isolated objects taken out of their historical and/or social context, but to show that museum collections are, in the end, always about humans and human conditions rather than about the objects themselves. The visible storage will therefore be presented as a hybrid between storage facility and exhibition.

In the process of re-organizing our collections we were also able to 'discover' objects and narratives that we were missing in our collections. Being field-oriented, we could quickly send out our ethnologists/anthropologists to do interviews and to collect these stories and objects.

We mention this new approach to organizing and displaying museum collections because it reflects our museums vision and characteristics. The museum's vision is the polar star in all our projects. To be more concrete, here are some excerpts from Sörmlands museums vision and enterprise-idea:

» To widen views and to inspire to commitment.
» Sörmlands museum always has human beings in focus and is active in the center of our society. That means that we make people visible and that we ourselves are visible.
» Everything we do as a museum (from exhibitions to collecting to pedagogical programs) should contribute to an individual's potential to

influence society and their own life-situation. The museum should give people perspectives on history and the future, on how it is, has been and will be to be a human being.

» The museum can contribute to sympathy and empathy for and between (different) people.
» Today's matters of course and habitual ideas, norms, values and behaviors are to be analyzed and not to be taken for granted.
» We have a certain knowledge and expertise for which we must take responsibility. Therefore, "we see it as our responsibility to antagonize and to question stereotypes and oversimplified images of history as well as the exclusivity of interpreting history."[2]

With this vision in mind we can always focus our attention to new issues and are not locked within a collections directory that primarily focuses on what kind of objects to collect. Rather we are able focus on human stories, independent of what kind of objects they might contribute with to the museum collections.

Moving outside the comfort zone – some examples

In order to collect these stories and to live up to our vision, we not only *should* but *have* to face difficult issues. Therefore, we have to move outside the area which "armchair-museologists" might consider as a comfort zone. We cannot passively wait until things come into our storage. We have to actively identify current issues in society, confront, and document them. What we are doing might not only be 'uncomfortable' for museum curators but also for society at large. Topics as immigration have become so controversial that they are either debated aggressively or avoided completely. Therefore, museums as public institutions play an important role in researching and displaying facts that reach beyond emotionally steered debates.

Of course, work in the field, as anthropologists call it, is not uncomplicated. Depending on which persons or group you will face you have different challenges to meet. The first challenge is how to approach your subjects, the second is how to establish trust, and the third is how to collect narratives

2 Translation by the authors, for the Swedish original, see https://sormlandsmuseum.se/om-oss/vision-och-kannetecken.

and objects. In all three phases we have not only to face others, probably unknown persons, but also ourselves, and not seldom we are confronted with ethical issues.

Alexandro's blanket

We have chosen a few examples from the field which we will present on the following pages. The first one is our documentation of the life of EU migrants[3] living and begging on the streets of the cities of Nyköping and Oxelösund (situated 20km east of Nyköping). Over the course of the last two years the presence of EU migrants begging in front different supermarkets and in the streets has been highly visible. This elevated a debate in Sweden about whether or not begging should be forbidden. But although everyone was and is conscious of the presence of begging EU migrants and meets them almost daily – which in most cases one observes is either a meeting of silently ignoring them or one of tossing them a few coins – we know surprisingly little about their lives, about who they are, what they feel and think, and how they came to be living in or travelling through this area under difficult circumstances.

That is why we decided to do a documentation of their experience, including interviews, taking photos, and collecting objects. We encountered many difficult questions, including how we approach possible interviewees and how we can explain what we are doing, considering possible language barriers in terms of our work-context[4]. How can we ask for an object from someone who has very few possessions, and how do we solve bureaucratic things like signing contracts with someone who probably cannot read the language which the forms are written in? What do we do if the interviewee tells us about activities that are illegal? And what if the story that we get told is contradictory or differs from the things we observe? What reactions will we meet?

3 The term 'EU migrants' is an unofficial umbrella term in Sweden commonly referring to migrants mostly coming from Bulgaria and Romania to earn money outside 'usual' forms of employment. Already the definition and usage of the term is a difficult issue.

4 Our (and our colleagues') experience from previous collecting-projects was that not everyone has a clear idea of what a museum of cultural history actually is or does. A common understanding is that it displays art and 'old things'. The idea that it is interested in 'common individuals' stories' seems to many rather unusual.

Fig. 1: Homeless Alexandro and curator Hanna Aili exchanging blankets ©P. Ostritsch, 2017

We started with two parallel approaches: one was to contact official institutions in the city which supported EU migrants. The other was to directly approach several EU migrants. Finally, we established contact with an EU migrant from Bulgaria called Alexandro (fig. 1), as well as with his twin brother and his sister-in-law. Mixing English with Swedish, we were able to have longer discussions with Alexandro. His open-mindedness and willingness to speak to us were just as important as his language-skills.

We[5] came into contact with Alexandro by mistaking him for being his brother. But as soon as we started talking to each other we became aware of the confusion and started laughing. Although not intended, this was an effective ice-breaker. Alexandro sat cross-legged on layers of different textiles and folded cardboard with a blanket over his legs. In front of him stood a box made out of old cardboard partly wrapped in gift wrap paper which served as a kind of desk for him. On the front side of the box there was an

5 In this case Hanna Aili, curator at Sörmlands Museum, and Peter Ostritsch. Hanna Aili wrote extensive field-notes which are accessible at Sörmlands Museum archive.

enlarged photograph of his relatives in Bulgaria: four children and two adults sitting on the floor of a stark house with brick-lined walls. Above the picture was a note in printed letters serving as information about Alexandro's situation. Beside the explanation were two small notes saying "God bless you" in Swedish. On top of the box was a used paper-cup from McDonald's serving as collection-receptacle. The cup was taped several times and was connected directly with the interior of the box which served as storage for the money.

We crouched in front of Alexandro and explained that we came from Sörmlands museum and asked if it was OK for him if we asked him some questions. He nodded and insinuated that he understood. He started by telling us that he has several children at home, that he was sick with diabetes, and that he has suffered from severe back problems. He had been sitting in front of the supermarket for almost three months. Although it was hard to be away from his family this was the only way for him to support them. Soon he would have to return because as an EU citizen he could only stay there for three months.

We asked him what his days look like and if there are many people putting something into his cup. "Some persons are nice, others are not as nice", he said. "Friends give more money, but most just give one or two kronor." During our whole conversation Alexandro looked up and greeted people entering and leaving the store. A lot of customers seemed to recognize him and greeted back. It did not become clear how often Alexandro had returned to Sweden and to that supermarket, but as far as he wanted to inform us his migration forth and back dated back at least two years. His work-days were from 8 until 21, i.e. the time-span between the opening and closing of the supermarket.

We offered him to buy a cup of coffee or tea, and to share a pizza later on. He accepted the tea but gave us only a vague answer about eating together in the evening.

How should we explain what we are doing at the museum, and what the museum is about? We decided to show him some prove and something concrete. We pulled out our mobile phones and searched for the museum website and showed him pictures of the new museum building and objects from our collections. We explained once more that we are collecting different narratives and stories in order to widen our collections and to reflect many different aspects of our society. Alexandro understood and was very open to our wish to interview him, although he first wanted to make sure that we were not news reporters abusing his story. It was also his idea to contribute to our

collection with one of his blankets, namely the blanket he was using the first time he came to Sweden. We thanked him and agreed to return three days later.

On our way back we were asking ourselves if he really had understood what we wanted and if he would be there on the day we agreed upon to meet him again. It was also self-evident for us that we could not accept his blanket as a gift without giving him something in return. Cash was out of the questions since he did not want to sign any receipt that would have been necessary for us to buy something with means from our official budget. So instead we bought him a new blanket which he gladly accepted and exchanged for his own blanket that he had washed on the weekend after our first meeting.

Finally, we returned in order to show him the pictures of him we had taken and photographs of his blanket in our online-database. This would not have been necessary from a mere practical point of view. However, it was absolutely necessary from a moral point of view: collecting life-stories from people who are in an unequal power-position in relation to the museum as an official institution depends on establishing trust. And that is not something that is done within a single meeting. Establishing trust presumes both time, patience, and open-mindedness. A final issue was how we should proceed with the usual signing of a contract which we use when receiving objects and information (and take pictures) to assure that we have the ownership, use of the material in exhibitions, and ability to publish it online or in publications. Alexandro did not want to sign any written contracts because he did neither really understand the written text nor did he trust any official institutions so far as to sign a document. To find an official translator was too complicated and expensive in our case. Instead we came to an oral agreement with Alexandro. Of course, there is still a moral and a judicial issue whether or not we can/should use and publish the material. In the end, we decided to publish Alexandro's story because we came to the conclusion that this is what he wanted and that this makes it possible for the stories of underrepresented, marginalized individuals and groups to make their way into a major narrative of our society – and not in a shortchanged/selfish way nor in a paternalistic one.

Two other examples of collecting outside the comfort zone regarding refugees are from one of the projects called *Displacement, Migration and Exile*. They are presented in summarized form below under the headlines 'Diana's rosary' and 'Starter kit from the Swedish Migration Board'.

During 2015 Europe and Sweden experienced something that became synonymous with 'The Refugee Crisis'. About 160,000 people sought asylum in

Sweden during that year, mostly from Syria.[6] The train stations in Stockholm and Malmö were filled with men, women, and children, exhausted from their long journeys in flight. The news was covered with stories about refugees and the struggle in communities to cope with the challenges of this immediate need for housing and caring for all these people in need.

In the project, we wanted to contribute with more knowledge and understanding about migration in Sörmland County, Sweden. We have conducted approximately 90 interviews with refugees, newcomers, and people working with migration, like the Migration Board of Sweden, the local municipalities of Sörmland county, and local political parties. We were documenting important parts of Swedish history; therefore, it was imperative for us to have a clear scientific purpose and focus.

How did migration and displacement become a difficult issue in Sweden? One part of the answer is that this field is under represented in the collections at museums in Sweden. Modern objects are missing and so are stories that contain life conditions for people who have migrated to Sweden. The second part of the answer is the portrayal of the people. Often, the portrayals tend to end up in stereotypical stories, events, and description of the individuals.

Diana's rosary

So how do you collect stories or objects from people that have lost everything? Diana is one of the persons we interviewed for the project. She fled with her husband from Afghanistan in 2008. Her story contains everything about being in flight and eventually reaching Sweden, that came to be their final destination. In addition, she also tells about her initial time in her new home in Sweden; how the stressful long wait for a decision from the Migration Board affected her, and the difficulties of the lack of family and friends. During her flight, Diana was pregnant and in many parts of the flight they were hidden in different ways by smugglers. For over a month, they were hidden in the basement of a house in Turkey, sharing the small space with cattle and 18 other people in refuge. It was a small limited area to be in and the only access to food and water was through the smugglers.

6 www.migrationsverket.se/Om-Migrationsverket/Statistik/Oversikter-och-statistik-fran-tidigare-ar/2015.html

Fig. 2: Diana's rosary ©Karin Andersson, 2017

Because Diana was pregnant, the smugglers sometimes granted her some extra dates and milk. She told us that her husband managed to find a way to heat some water and make her a cup of tea to go with the dates and she tells how she was reminded of how happy she was to be married to him. She began to save the kernels from the dates, which she then began to rub against the floor and an old rug. This to make the kernels smooth and shape them in a way to enable her to tie them together into a rosary (fig. 2). For her, this became a way of staying occupied and at the same time something to, literally, attach her faith to. The rosary is now in our collection as a symbol and an example of one of many strategies people use to keep up hope of survival under very difficult conditions.

Diana's story gives us a glance into the cruel and harsh environment of being in refuge, being in the hands of smugglers and not knowing how the flight will end. This type of interview wouldn't be possible if we were not able to build a mutual trust between the institution, the interviewer, and the respondent. By doing this kind of work and leaving the typical comfort zones of the museum, we are not only gathering more understanding, but we are also able to give voices to the persons who usually never get the chance to tell their stories in their own words.

Starter kit from the Swedish Migration Board

Asylum seekers arriving at the city of Flen all receive a basic set of household items in connection with the enrollment. Accommodation officers hand over the room-keys and a white plastic bucket with kitchenware, as this is a typical Swedish 'home starter kit'. Similar basic equipment is handed out to asylum seekers in other parts of Sweden as well and is considered a loan to operate during the asylum period.

Objects tell us many things about their contemporary society and the objects never exist independently of their contexts and from the people who created and used them. The objects are, for most parts, meaning-bearing and therefore important to study in themselves. Amongst other things, the starter kits contain a potato peeler, a kitchen tool that is commonly used only in the Nordic countries. As most of the asylum seekers are from countries outside of the Nordics, and also often outside of Europe, for many, the peeler becomes a symbol of 'Swedishness'. We have collected and studied a similar kit from the Swedish Migration Board from ten years earlier and could easily spot the similarities in the kits from then and now.

Conclusion

We have shown different stories and objects we collect at Sörmlands Museum. Museums and the institutions have considerable amount of power in collecting and sharing stories. Therefore, it is imperative to carefully weigh what kind of stories you collect and don't collect. We always need to thoroughly discuss which subjects to engage into and why. Our collection policy does not revolve around what kind of objects to collect but which stories to collect and what kind of questions to ask.

The point we want to make with these examples is the following: there is nothing wrong with collecting *inside* the usual museum zone, but it is only when you step *outside* of that comfort zone that you get close to many of the difficult issues our society is facing today. As a foundation, museums of cultural history need a clearly formulated vision that goes beyond the questions of which kind of objects to collect. It is the vision which paves the way out of our comfort zones.

Suzie Thomas, Eerika Koskinen-Koivisto, Mirkka Hekkurainen

Sind wir noch Freunde?

Displaying the difficult history of the German presence in Finnish Lapland, 1941–44.

Abstract During the Second World War, Finland allied with Germany in the battles against the Soviet Union. The end of this alliance, however, lead to a conflict known as the Lapland War. Still after 70 years, some Finns face difficulties in acknowledging and engaging with this period of their history. This is illustrated particularly well in the recent exhibition *Wir waren Freunde/Olimme ystäviä* (We Were Friends), which was on display at the Provincial Museum of Lapland in Rovaniemi. The exhibition covered the experiences of both local residents – Finns and indigenous Sámi – and the German soldiers and other arrivals (such as Soviet prisoners of war) posted in Lapland from 1940–44. The exhibition ran from April 2015 to January 2016. The exhibition received mainly positive feedback from both media and museum visitors, but also other, equally strong but negative (and sometimes surprising) reactions.

Keywords dark heritage, museum exhibition, Second World War, Finnish Lapland

Introduction

In this chapter we outline some of key findings of the visitor survey that we carried out at the Provincial Museum of Lapland in Rovaniemi, Finland, during a particular temporary exhibition. *Wir waren Freunde* (We Were Friends) opened on 27 April 2015, and closed on 10 January 2016. The exhibition addressed the period, from 1940–44, when Finland – and the Lapland region in particular – received German troops stationed there as part of Hitler's Operation Barbarossa during the Second World War (WWII). *Wir waren Freunde* thus refers to the time when Finland and Germany were brothers-in-arms (officially a co-belligerency rather a formal alliance). This co-belligerency took place after Finland, in fear of a new attack from Soviet Red Army, desperately needed financial help: military equipment, everyday commodities and food. Germany, on the other hand, had plans to access the mines of Pechenga and the routes of the Arctic Ocean (Mann and Jörgensen 2002). Finland allowed the German army and its approximately 200,000 German soldiers to operate freely in the vast area of Finnish Lapland, and to establish their Northern headquarters to the region's capital, Rovaniemi. The cohabitation between local Finnish and Sámi and the Germans was for the most part friendly. In many townships, the arrival of Germans meant well-paid opportunities for work and trade, and thus access to better livelihoods and material goods. Nonetheless, this coexistence ended in violence with the outbreak of the Lapland War in Autumn 1944, following a Finno-Soviet treaty which compelled Finland to expel the German military from within its borders. The scorched earth tactics applied by Germans as a response to this caused significant damage to the infrastructure and dwellings in the area and is today referred as 'the burning of Lapland' (e.g. Mann and Jörgensen 2002; Tuominen 2005).

Wir waren Freunde was organized in a thematic way, so that as visitors moved around the exhibition space, following a general introduction, they encountered sections on different aspects of everyday life during the period with the German military presence. Themes covered included the media during that time, showing examples of wartime propaganda newspapers in both Germans and Finnish; trade and especially barter between the locals and the Germans; prisoner of war camps; romance between German soldiers and local women, and the aftermath – including a small section about the construction of and reactions to a German military mausoleum outside of Rovaniemi in a place called Norvajärvi (also Koskinen-Koivisto 2016).

An evocative soundscape is provided by a recording of the infamous German military marching song *Erika*, commonly associated with the German *Wehrmacht*.

We were particularly interested in this exhibition in the context of our wider research project *Lapland's Dark Heritage*, which examined different interactions with the material legacy of the WWII German military presence in Finnish Lapland. Although a temporary exhibition, *Wir waren Freunde* also stood out as unusual for focussing as it did specifically on Lapland's WWII experiences – an aspect of Finland's official wartime narrative that is often neglected elsewhere in official museum interpretation (Thomas and Koskinen-Koivisto 2016).

Methods

We employed a relatively straightforward data collection method of using a questionnaire survey in paper form, which was placed at the end of the exhibition for visitors to fill out if they wished. We did this in partnership with the Provincial Museum of Lapland staff, who kept the paper piles replenished and took responsibility for collecting the survey papers together to send to us for analysis. Questionnaire surveys of museum visitors are a common approach (e.g. Hooper-Greenhill 2006), and allow for data to be collected even when the researchers are unable to be present the whole time, as was the case for us with this exhibition (the research team based in Helsinki, many kilometers from Rovaniemi). Whilst we must also acknowledge the limitations of such an approach, for example that visitors' 'immediate aesthetic reactions in the exhibition halls could not be observed', but rather their recollections of aspects of the exhibition only afterwards (Kirchberg and Tröndle 2012, 448), for practical and resource reasons it was the best approach available for us for this particular study. The questionnaire was made available in both Finnish and English, and included a short preamble explaining the survey and linking it to the wider research project:

> Thank you for picking up this visitor questionnaire! The questions should not take more than a few minutes of your time. Your answers will help Arktikum staff evaluate the exhibition, and will also contribute to a research project being carried out by staff from the Universities of Helsinki and Oulu, funded by the Academy of Finland. You can find out more about this project by

visiting http://blogs.helsinki.fi/lapland-dark-heritage. Any data used for the research will be anonymised.

Placed on the table at the exit of the interview, along with the questionnaires themselves, were pens and pencils for visitors to use, and a letterbox in which to place completed questionnaires. The questions covered a range of topics, from standard marketing questions about place of residence, age, gender and how many people were in the respondent's party visiting the exhibition, through to qualitative and quantitative questions about the exhibition's content. So, visitors were asked to rate the exhibition and their enjoyment of (excellent – good – average – poor – disappointing), and whether they felt they had learned something new. Yet they were also asked to highlight which part of the exhibition they found the most meaningful. As free-text fields, we asked which section was their favourite, which section in their opinion was the least interesting section, and what kinds of emotions the exhibition evoked, if any (not really – positive – negative – contradictory – other). We also asked respondents if they had any personal experiences or family connections to WWII, and in particular to the German presence in Finnish Lapland and if they have carried out any sort of personal or family research into this particular history.

The ways in which respondents answered to the survey varied significantly; some only ticked multiple choice options and did not answer any of the open questions, whereas others wrote very long and considered, often quite emotional, free-text responses. We also noticed that a few respondents had only filled in one side of the two-sided questionnaire, perhaps not noticing that there were more questions on the reverse side.

Results

When we initially came up with the idea to leave a questionnaire survey at the exit of the exhibition, it was with the assumed knowledge that people generally do not enjoy, or perceive the process as being time-consuming and unrewarding, and thus do not fill in, paper questionnaire surveys on a regular basis, for example possibly finding them impersonal (Wilkinson and Birmingham 2003, 10). In our case, we collected some 478 responses in total. Statistics provided to us from the Provincial Museum of Lapland show that for the year 2015, there were 91,143 visitors to the whole museum (with the

exhibition running from late April that year until mid-January the next). The museum does not monitor the visitor numbers to individual exhibition spaces within the museum itself, but assuming that around a little less than a third of the number above did not visit due to the exhibition not being open when they visited, this would equate to approximately 60,800 people who could have visited the exhibition. If this is the case, we can estimate a response rate of around 0.8%. This figure is a very rough estimate however, based on the limited and approximate data that we have. If more people visited over the year during certain seasons (such as summer or mid-winter, when many families visit Rovaniemi to visit the Santa Clause Village), it is possible that the figures over these periods were higher. If not all museum visitors entered the *Wir waren Freunde* exhibition space, then we again have a higher percentage than indicated of the visitors who did go. We were pleased to attract several hundred responses and consider this meaningful data, although have also to acknowledge that it is likely a low percentage of the actual total of museum visitors during that time.

We have focused elsewhere on the critical aspects of the exhibition as representing a form of 'difficult' or 'dark' heritage (see Koskinen-Koivisto and Thomas 2017 for discussion of the concept), and the differing perspectives of visitors of different backgrounds in this context (Seitsonen et al. 2018). Therefore in this particular chapter we focus on the reactions of visitors to specific sections and themes of the exhibition. This is highlighted particularly in free-text responses in the survey, some of which we quote in the following Analysis section.

Analysis

Analyzing the background of the visitors who answered the survey, we learned that 68% of them were Finnish and 32% were from outside of Finland. In other words, we had 326 Finnish respondents and 152 respondents from other countries. About 22% of Finnish respondents (104 in total) were local people from Rovaniemi itself. The majority of Finnish visitors (70%), were familiar with the theme of the exhibition, and many reported that they had family members who had experienced WWII and interacted with the Germans during that time. The same amount of foreign visitors, most of whom came to see the exhibition as part of the wider Arktikum exhibition centre where the Provincial Museum of Lapland is housed, had not heard of

the exhibition before and did not have previous knowledge of the collaboration between Finland and Germany during WWII. About 30% of local visitors had heard and read about the exhibition in advance in media (Seitsonen et al. 2018).

The majority of all responses about the general impressions about the exhibition were positive or neutral. Some 90.5% of the visitors found the exhibition excellent or good, (6.7% found it average, and only 2.7% found it poor or disappointing). Many respondents of the visitor survey brought up the exhibition's focus on ordinary people in their open answers and comments. We (Eerika Koskinen-Koivisto or Mirkka Hekkurainen) have translated the Finnish responses into English, and feature some representative general quotes here: "At the end [it is about] ordinary people encountering each other under exceptional circumstances." "I liked the focus on human beings in war time, rather than military strategies." These remarks catch the very idea of the exhibition that was welcomed by many the respondents. According to many Finnish respondents, this approach represents the "untold" side of the war story: "So wonderful that you dared to disclose another 'untold' perspective too, which has been reality for the people who lived here."

The visitors who came from Germany, on their part, seemed especially appreciative of the fact that also Germans were seen as regular human beings in the context of WWII. One German visitor saw the exhibition as "honest and objective", and another commented that it was the first time that he had seen an exhibition where WWII era Germans are portrayed as something else than monsters. These thoughts resonate with the notions of reflexive attitudes of people who visit dark heritage sites such as the German cemetery of Norvajärvi, situated just north of Rovaniemi. The Finnish visitors who wrote about their experiences in social media, had pondered upon the young age of fallen soldiers, their situations and sentiments of being far away from home seeing the foreign soldiers as regular human beings (Koskinen-Koivisto 2016).

Despite overall positive impressions and comments many visitors also reported that the exhibition raised controversial feelings: "I was surprised by the photos that showed Finnish people celebrating with a Nazi flag on the table and greeting as Nazis – yack! [sic]". This rather shocked reaction to seeing a Nazi flag and the notorious salute being performed by Finns shows how this chapter of history, the Finnish-German alliance, is not only difficult and sensitive but also distant and foreign subject for some Finnish people. It has been argued elsewhere that Finns have tried to distance themselves from

Fig. 1: One of the photographs that could be activated through a dedicate mobile application to 'talk' to the visitor. Photo: Eerika Koskinen-Koivisto, 2015

the German war efforts and ideology ever since the war (Herva 2014, 300). A multivocal approach to WWII history is thus not an easy goal for a museum exhibition to aspire to.

The contradictory feelings were also related to the lack of information about the tragedy that followed the German co-belligerent presence in Lapland: "I kind of longed for the sense of drama that happened after this friendship…" The dramatic events this respondent refers to are related to the Lapland War and major destruction that it caused for the township of Rovaniemi and the rest of Lapland. The *Wir waren Freunde* exhibition concentrated on the times of friendly relationship and the events and consequences of Lapland War are represented in the museums as part of the permanent exhibition *Northern Ways of Life* that among its exhibits includes two dioramas of the city of Rovaniemi, one from 1939 before WWII began, and the other right

Fig. 2: Detail of the section of the exhibition dealing with the romance between Liisa and Sigi. Photo: Eerika Koskinen-Koivisto, 2015

after the "burning of Lapland" in 1944, where most of the dwellings, leaving only chimneys stand in the landscape (see also Sivula and Siro 2015 for deeper discussion of the significance and history of these two town scale models).

Only nine respondents in total had experienced the exhibition as evoking mainly negative feelings. All these were foreign (non-Finnish) visitors, representing different European countries. The critical voices pointed to lack of information of the darker side of history, and of excluding totally the time before and after the alliance:

> In general, I miss the critical approach to this topic. It seems that the decision of Finland to incorporate with the nazis is seen in a positive way. It's also negative that the exhibition completely ignores the time before and after this timespan. Was it OK to cooperate with the Nazis?? Good friendship?

> How close, sympathetic local people were with Nazis, 21,000 SS-soldiers… Painting a too romantic picture. Erika-march in the beginning echoes evil.

Some of the critics also mentioned an overall broad and "superficial" focus and the lack of historical facts and evidence about the destruction and genocide caused by the Nazis. Among the most critical voices there are some visitors whose family members died in the hands of Nazis, and it is understandable that their reactions to the exhibition are thus strong:

> Extremely cursory display + broad information about the war and nazis overall.

> To show the fate of those who were victims of this friendship. To focus on WWII history without describing Nazi-Germany as a state of war criminals. Surprised how such an exhibition could be presented, the tendency exhibited here would be impossible in Germany or Austria!

The last remark about how this kind of exhibition could not be produced elsewhere, is most probably accurate, and explains the surprising effect that it had. It is important to note that the museum staff members working on the exhibition were aware of the dispute that *Wir waren Freunde* might cause among international audiences (as indicated to us during interviews during and after the exhibition's display). They planned the exhibition to take place outside of the major winter tourism season of Lapland when there are higher numbers of international tourists in the region, and it was taken down before the end of January, a time of year when traditionally many Israeli tourist groups arrive in Finnish Lapland.

The favourite aspects that around a third (33.4%) of visitors that answered this question mentioned was the variety and quality of objects and photos represented in the exhibition. The exhibition introduced a wide selection of unpublished photographic material from the museum's own archives. In addition, several families, both Finnish and German, had sent their family albums and individual photos to the museum. In addition, some of the photos of the exhibition were made alive through a mobile application. The application clearly appealed to younger audience (fig. 1, p. 160).

Most respondents, as we noted earlier, found it positive that the exhibition touched upon the everyday life of ordinary citizens and their daily encounters under WWII. Many answers to the survey highlighted that personal stories and materials such as "authentic letters and diary entries" were

of particular interest to them. Maaria Linko (1998) has pointed out that through visiting museums and exhibitions with emotional experiences and involve thought-provoking elements, people can enhance their knowledge about collective history and memory, and revive their own memories and family histories. In Linko's opinion, the personal elements and examples of individual lives of real people are crucial for evoking interest in history. In this light it is not a surprise that a high minority of 38% of respondents that answered the question listed as their favourite part of the exhibition the section that included the authentic letters of a Finnish Woman named 'Liisa' and a German soldier named 'Sigi', that illuminated an intimate love story (fig. 2, p. 161).

Interestingly, researchers who have studied the legacy of WWII and especially the Lapland War in Finland through popular culture, such as books and films, argue that one of the key themes that is revisited the Finnish-German relationships especially with regards to the role of women and their sexuality (see e.g. Sääskilahti 2015; Hiltunen and Sääskilahti 2017). These relationships were considered shameful and Finnish women who had encounters with German soldiers were accused of loose sexual morals. Although addressed in popular culture, at the level of collective and personal history, these relationships were a taboo issue for a long time, until very recently (see Väyrynen 2014). In the light of these accusations and silencing of women's experiences, the representation of Liisa's and Sigi's love story in the *Wir waren Freunde* exhibition can be considered as an act of breaking a taboo. The fact that Liisa's descendants had gifted the museum her mementoes and the series of letters and photos.

Conclusions

The respondents of the survey who had answered to open questions and added more detailed comments about how they felt about the exhibition in general seemed to be pleased with the approach that was taken in the exhibition to the wartime. The respondents seemed to be aware of the role of museums and individual exhibitions in representing history from a chosen perspective, and some respondents expected that the exhibition would have addressed also other prior events and consequences of Finnish-German alliance.

In general, although gleaning controversy for other reasons (see e.g. Koskinen-Koivisto and Thomas 2017 for discussion of the debates generated around the promotional match boxes produced to advertise *Wir waren Freunde*), the exhibition itself seems to have been for the most part positively received. This could be in part due to its status as inherently local history that local people felt was important to discuss and no longer to keep silent about, in addition to the universal experience of WWII, to which most visitors can relate even if the period falls outside of their own lifespan.

The longer term legacy of the exhibition is at yet unknown; at the time of writing there are no plans to tour the exhibition to other locations, and its status as a temporary display means that over time it will itself become a thing of memory. However, in many ways it has indeed broken taboos within Finland and it will be interesting to see if future exhibitions – temporary or permanent – follow suit.

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Karen Logan

Collecting the Troubles and Beyond: The role of the Ulster Museum in interpreting contested history

Abstract The representation of contested history within the context of a divided society presents both significant challenges and opportunities. In response National Museums Northern Ireland has begun a new initiative entitled *Collecting the Troubles and Beyond*, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund. The aim of the project is to widen the scope of the collection through greater academic and community engagement and to ensure that the collection can be used to support a full and inclusive narrative.

As well as material relating directly to political developments and conflict, collecting activity is being focussed on wider social, cultural and economic themes thereby enabling more nuanced and inclusive engagement with this complex period of history. We are working with community groups and representatives to establish the significance of events and objects through workshops and dialogue resulting in an important element of co-production within the project.

This case study will illustrate that despite the inherent challenges in interpreting contested history, the museum can play an important role in building understanding and in helping to address the legacy of the past. It can offer a shared space in which to explore controversial issues through critical narrative and interpretation which presents multiple perspectives and offers the opportunity for dialogue and debate.

Keywords conflict, legacy, dialogue, engagement, interpretation

Introduction

The decades of civil and political conflict commonly referred to as 'the Troubles' in Northern Ireland claimed over 3,600 lives and affected almost everyone who lived here and many others from further afield. There are obvious challenges and sensitivities involved in interpreting such recent, and still unresolved, conflict in a museum setting as the history of what happened continues to be contested. This article will outline the role the Ulster Museum has played in encouraging dialogue, building understanding, taking a critical approach and representing multiple perspectives in order to facilitate audience interpretation of our recent past, and the relevance that has today in the context of a divided society emerging from conflict. This represents a new approach taken by the Museum, which builds on previous experience and contributes to a new understanding of the role and purpose of museums in relation to social impact.

When the Ulster Museum in Belfast re-opened in 2009 following a period of refurbishment, an exhibition entitled *The Troubles* was launched as part of the new History galleries. Consisting entirely of black and white photographs and text, the impact of the exhibition was limited by the absence of original artefacts and alternative viewpoints. The perspective was comparable to that of a photo-journalist and little or no interpretation was offered. Journalists at the time described it as "bland, safe and strenuously non-controversial" (Meredith 2009) and "the past defeating the present … for fear of giving offence [or] causing controversy" (O'Connor 2009). While in general the public, and particularly international visitors, found the exhibition interesting and well balanced, the lack of social history was apparent and visitor feedback called for the inclusion of objects and personal stories.

In 2015 a successful application was made to the Heritage Lottery Fund to address the limitations of the *Troubles* exhibition through its Collecting Cultures Programme. A new initiative entitled *Collecting the Troubles and Beyond* was established and it received £370,000 of funding. The aim of the project is to widen the scope of the collection, supported by greater academic and community engagement, in order to enhance our interpretation of our recent past. Research into the existing collection and a thorough assessment of its strengths and weaknesses informed the collection development plan. Its focus was on going beyond the political narrative to represent broader social, cultural and economic history as well as exploring the impact of conflict on everyday life, people and communities. A modern approach to social history

curatorship was adopted, emphasising the importance of documenting the personal and community context of objects. Time was invested in establishing a network of contacts and liaising with relevant groups as well as delivering outreach activities and workshops.

A cyclical approach to interpretive design was established whereby collections development, supported by consultation and engagement, informed interpretive planning which was then subject to evaluation and review and then the cycle would begin again in response to that feedback. This process remains ongoing and it is important that the Troubles and Beyond gallery remains dynamic and offers a platform for engagement. Northern Ireland remains in the transition from conflict to peace and in this context there are significant opportunities for National Museums NI to take a more proactive role in dealing with the legacy of the past. In reference to the *Collecting the Troubles and Beyond* project, within which the Community Relations Council is regarded as an important stakeholder, Programme Director Deirdre MacBride stated:

> As work continues on developing The Troubles and Beyond gallery the Ulster Museum has a unique opportunity to create a space in which dialogue and understanding about The Troubles can occur, which is situated in the context of Northern Ireland's continuing emergence from years of conflict and violence and in which we are building peace and democracy.

This paper will outline the role of the Museum in relation to such opportunities and how the framework of the project was designed to support academic and public engagement with contested history, whilst being mindful of the ethical considerations involved.

2. The role of the Ulster Museum

The role of museums is changing. In his book *Transforming Museums in the Twenty-First Century*, Professor Graham Black argues for a profoundly different, much more participatory experience – one that involves creating more meaningful opportunities for engagement with collections (Black 2011). In a national context the Northern Ireland Museums Policy (2011) states that museums have an important role in a shared and better future for Northern Ireland as they can "help us understand our diversity and our

interdependencies” (Department of Culture Arts and Leisure 2011). Taking these objectives together and being more proactive in engaging its audience, National Museums NI has delivered a significant programme of collections access and engagement in recent years. This has involved reaching out to new audiences and engaging with difficult subjects through exhibitions such as *Art of the Troubles* and *Remembering 1916: Your Stories*. Most recently, a new vision, mission statement and set of values have been identified for the organisation which aims to celebrate who we are: telling the stories of our past, challenging our present and shaping our future. With this remit curators can pose questions and challenge ideas, enabling visitors to be more critical in their analysis and to communicate their views to the Museum and each other. It is hoped that this will afford opportunities to shape our future through dialogue and shared understanding as visitors reflect on sensitive and contentious issues curated responsibly and in context.

There are a number of inherent challenges in ensuring the ethical representation of a conflict which claimed thousands of lives. From the outset of the project a strong ethical framework was established, guided by the principles of ethical remembering, those outlined by the Community Relations Council and the Museum Association’s Code of Ethics for Museums (Community Relations Council 2011; Museums Association 2015). There are responsibilities in terms of editorial integrity, providing and generating accurate information for and with the public, engaging with new and existing audiences and treating everyone equally and with respect (Museums Association 2015). In addition, there is a significant duty of care to victims and survivors. In consultation with the Academic Advisory Group for the project, and in particular Dr Kris Brown from the Transitional Justice Institute at Ulster University, a set of key principles was established that underpin the project and inform the Museum’s approach:

» To recognise key aspects of the Troubles period and chart their development and evolution.
» To provide context to the Troubles period by examining wider social, economic, and cultural activity and their interplay with the Troubles.
» To allow a range of interpretations of, and from, the period to be displayed.
» To facilitate reflection on our historical understanding of the period, and commentary on the exhibition.

- » To engage with a wide range of communities and constituencies in Northern Ireland and beyond.
- » To incorporate information drawn from scholarship and apply best museological practice.

These are aligned with the principles of ethical remembering and are intended to address the challenges of interpreting sensitive and contested history by emphasising context, pluralism and critical reflection. The following sections describe how these principles have been put into practice through the *Collecting the Troubles and Beyond* project in order to better position the Museum to fulfil its role in interpreting, and addressing the legacy of, our recent past.

2.1 Encouraging dialogue

Poulot (2012) suggests that museums can provide a forum for discussion on issues of memory and history. Rightly so, however, effective dialogue that promotes openness and sharing, while acknowledging hopes and fears, has much greater transformative potential (Hardy and Hussein 2017). There may not always be agreement, but reasoned disagreement can build more authentic and stronger relationships and addressing difficult questions directly and respectfully can build trust (Hardy and Hussein 2017).

A phased approach was taken to the development of the Troubles and Beyond exhibition, which provided a platform for consultation and engagement. Time was spent working with community groups and representatives to establish the significance of events and objects through workshops and dialogue, resulting in an important element of co-production within the project. Audience involvement was encouraged through events and touring exhibitions that brought collections out to local venues. This both raised awareness of the project and offered members of the public the opportunity to comment on, or contribute to, the proposed content for the exhibition. Press releases and gallery notices made an open call for contributions and the response was measured but significant, spanning a wide geographical area and representing a range of perspectives. At all stages participant and visitor feedback was collated and an open conversation continues to be encouraged.

In order to align with best practice and promote discourse from a museological perspective, seminar days were held to explore themes of diversity

and pluralism and the sensitivities involved in interpreting conflict. An Academic Advisory Group was established to advise on overall approach, context, accuracy, inclusiveness and balance. The development of the exhibition was informed by these processes of academic and community engagement and the result affords new opportunities to encourage dialogue within the space. Lisle (2006) describes how experiences of the sublime (a powerful and potentially destabilising response to terror or awe) are often regulated or resolved within conflict exhibitions. The Troubles and Beyond exhibition is not focussed exclusively on war and extends into post-conflict Northern Ireland, yet the violence of the Troubles and its impact is left unresolved. As a result, there are numerous entry points to continued and effective dialogue in terms of sharing lived experience and building mutual understanding within, and between, communities.

2.2 Building understanding

The Museums Association's flagship campaign *Museums Change Lives* has demonstrated the social impact museums can have and how that can be augmented through a reciprocal relationship with museum audiences. Conducting research into collections and engagement with them helps people to make sense of the world and their place in it (Black 2011) and important opportunities exist to build understanding around difficult subjects. While the previous *Troubles* gallery presented a factual description which Cameron (2005) would class as a surface level of interpretation, the new exhibition aims to offer a deeper interpretation, a critical and challenging representation that links intersecting narratives. For example, a bomb disposal robot used by the British Army in response to the security situation is displayed alongside a metal bin lid that residents in nationalist communities would have rattled on the ground to warn of soldiers entering the area.

There is a responsibility to accurately communicate key information about the Troubles in a clear and effective manner. However, this is contested history and numerous interpretations exist, both in the historiography and research into the conflict as well as in terms of communal understanding and collective memories. In that context the aim is not to achieve consensus, but to encourage narrative hospitality. Integrative complexity offers a way of recognising and coding the intricacy of human thought and personality, individual or collective (Savage and Boyd-Macmillan 2010). There are seven levels

of integrative complexity from seeing only one point of view to understanding the integration of many points of view. Individuals move up and down this scale according to situation and/or stimulus. Conflict and the contestation of our history can begin to be resolved through ascending these levels. By interpreting diverse perspectives, in context, alongside original artefacts and information drawn from scholarship, it is hoped visitors gain a greater understanding of the history of Northern Ireland and how different narratives intersect.

The facilitation and interplay of diverse narratives can be further promulgated in a structured way to promote understanding. For example, gallery-based learning resources and activities have been developed for school and university groups as well as self-guided visitors. As part of a parallel project *Voices of 68* (Reynolds and Blair 2018), a series of student conferences have been delivered during which pupils take part in thought provoking lectures, engaging activities, gallery tours and interactive panel discussion with key figures from 1968. The amalgamation of academic research, museum interpretation, and direct engagement has proved a successful model which could be applied more widely to building understanding around contested history.

2.3 Taking a critical approach

In response to visitor feedback the new Troubles and Beyond exhibition is structured chronologically and within each decade there are three integral themes: i. political developments; ii. conflict; and iii. life during the Troubles. The latter provides social, cultural and economic context as well as reference to employment, education and the impact of the Troubles on everyday life. Consideration is given to the nature of the conflict, its causes and its legacy both locally and internationally. The visitor is presented with a curated selection of objects and a range of perspectives including individual testimonies and must draw together their own interpretation. The approach is intended to challenge ideas, debunk myths, to demonstrate the integrative complexity of the conflict. A new interpretive device called 'Stop and Think' was designed to deliberately punctuate the narrative with short points of reference or statistics that again would challenge visitors' thinking. For example, in December 1971 the British Home Secretary, Reginald Maudling, discussing the situation in Northern Ireland referred to "an acceptable level

of violence" (McVeigh 2015). During that year 180 people lost their lives (McKittrick et al. 2007).

There is a risk that placing an emphasis on the trauma of events results in personalisation, psychologising and the production of emotion, which makes it difficult to interpret and understand the underlying factors more comprehensively (Poulot 2012). In challenging existing perceptions we can demonstrate that the violence of the Troubles was not inevitable. Conflict can be seen as a series of processes which evolves over time through periods of latent conflict, the emergence and escalation of conflict, stalemate and the subsequent de-escalation of conflict, negotiation and peacebuilding (Lund 1996). Examining these processes in more detail enables us to give greater consideration to the causes of conflict and the requirements and conditions for peace and reconciliation. If the Museum is to have a role in peacebuilding it is to challenge visitors to be critical in their understanding of history, to introduce a degree of complexity that ensures multiple perspectives are given consideration.

2.4 Representing multiple perspectives

The traumatic events of the years after 1968 touched almost everyone who lived in Northern Ireland and many others from further afield. Inevitably the interpretation of these events is contested in terms of significance, meaning and responsibility. While we have a shared past we do not have a shared memory. Different perceptions and interpretations exist and the museum should present pluralism without bias. The previous *Troubles* exhibition lacked both original artefacts and alternative perspectives so from inception the *Collecting the Troubles and Beyond* project was designed to focus on collection development to ensure the collection could be used to support a full and inclusive narrative. A diverse range of groups representing different sectors of the community, ex-combatants and ex-service personnel were invited to contribute to discussions around contemporary collecting and to inform and oversee inclusivity. This involved representatives from groups that National Museums NI actively seek to work with including women's groups, the LGBT community, and ethnic minority groups as well as targeting areas that have been particularly adversely affected by the Troubles (identified for priority interventions by the Northern Ireland Executive).

Lisle (2006) points out that the new language of inclusion adopted by museums in assimilating all possible points of view can limit the audience's capacity to be critical or subversive. Yet to tell one part of the story but to exclude another would limit the potential for peacebuilding. Visitor feedback called for the inclusion of personal stories, however, these also present challenges in terms of editorial integrity. How do you judge the authenticity of one account or another? There are inherent risks in presenting memory and reflective opinion, the subjectivity can destabilise the narrative and it can be as much about forgetting and self-censoring (Walkowitz and Knauer 2009). That said, the power of individual perspectives and personal responses is in evoking a recognitive response from the audience based on personal truth (Powers-Jones 2014). The decision was taken to present individual testimonies explicitly in a dedicated feature within the exhibition composed of rotatable frames that incorporate a photograph on one side and a short account of the person's experiences, written in their own words, on the other. This enabled the Museum to present broader narratives counterpoised with individual voices, introducing a degree of criticality and subversion whilst maintaining inclusivity.

3. Contemporary relevance

The Troubles and Beyond exhibition does not end with the signing of the Good Friday Agreement, but extends to the present day. The inclusion of material relating to a 'post conflict' Northern Ireland enables greater exploration of continuity and change within local society and this is enhanced through the chronological structure of the exhibition. The Museum has an important role in the transition from conflict to peace in enabling visitors to reflect on sensitive and contentious issues in context and in helping to promote narrative hospitality.

It is understood that political change and uncertainty can act as a trigger for renewed struggles (Walkowitz and Knauer 2004). In the context of the current political stalemate in Northern Ireland and the failure of the government to meaningfully address the legacy of the past, there is an opportunity for the Museum to provide leadership and direction on legacy issues. Many of the issues commonly cited around culture and identity can be explored constructively within the museum context. To date a number of events have been held to examine symbology, cultural traditions and community relations and

Fig.: The exhibition *Collecting the Troubles and Beyond* ©National Museums NI, 2018

the Museum can go further now the exhibition is in place to work directly with groups and community representatives.

During the development of the exhibition the Community Relations Council, WAVE and the Commission for Victims and Survivors were consulted to ensure that important issues of representation were addressed in an appropriate and sensitive manner. The exhibition content is clear on the sources and impacts of harm and refers to legacy issues in terms of ongoing inquiries, allegations of collusion and many of the factors that result in the Troubles being described as a 'dirty war'. By bringing these accounts together there are opportunities to build understanding around the impact of the Troubles and to facilitate the development of narratives which welcome complexity. McNally (2019) advocates a social peace process as opposed to a political process and perhaps that is where the role of the museum should be rooted as part of a wider programme of peacebuilding and psychosocial support. Furthermore, McNally (2019) suggests this process should be based on a socio-ecological framework which situates individuals within wider social,

political and cultural contexts and recognises the interaction of four different levels – individual, family, community and society. The Museum can provide both context and a space for individual interaction, inter-generational and familial exchange and community group visits.

4. Conclusion

Subsequent to the ICOM Conference *Difficult Issues*, the Troubles and Beyond exhibition opened on 31 March 2018 and represents an important step forward by National Museums NI (fig., p. 175). Journalist Fionola Meredith, who was one of the main critics of the 2009 exhibition, described it as a “brave move” and a “vast improvement” on what went before (Meredith 2018). The response from visitors has also been positive and encouraging with a sense that such an exhibition was expected and overdue. The importance of objects is apparent in the feedback as is the value of personal testimony and the impact of the more poignant aspects of the exhibition. One individual said: “I experienced a mixture of emotion – sadness at all this community has gone through, relief that we are past the worst, but disappointment at our faltering peace process”.

So, what is the role of the Museum in interpreting contested history? Acknowledging that addressing our violent past is difficult and painful, but necessary, Meredith (2018) goes on to state that the Museum has a special duty to provide a space for visitors to “reflect on the complicated, cataclysmic events that happened here and how those experiences have shaped us”. Absolutely, and this paper has demonstrated that the Museum has a significant role to play in offering space for reflection and an opportunity for visitors to examine contested history through critical narrative and interpretation, within which multiple perspectives intersect. However, it is argued that the role of the Museum can go beyond this and a much more proactive approach can be taken to engaging with difficult history with a view to transformative, rather than reflective, experiences. In partnership with academia, community representatives, support groups and others, the Museum can continue to encourage dialogue, build understanding and support efforts to address the legacy of the past in Northern Ireland.

The Troubles and Beyond exhibition at the Ulster Museum has been designed as a dynamic space which offers a platform for engagement and will continue to evolve in response to dialogue and feedback. It is no longer

limited by the absence of artefacts, critical analysis or multiple perspectives, if anything it is now limited by the physical confines of its space and there is the potential to extend it further or to inform the development of other exhibitions. The process continues, and the Museum understands that the pace at which the public is ready to address the past varies. In response to the question "do you have a story to share?" more than one visitor has written "not yet".

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Merete Ipsen

Difficult issues around gender

Abstract Museums can be safe places for unsafe facts. Museums can frame debate and ideological as well as political discussions.

We started the Women's Museum in Denmark 35 years ago as pioneers. We focused on the untold and developed outreach programmes. The Museum got the reputation of giving voices to the minorities, telling non-told stories and let ordinary people search for knowledge in the past and know about hidden or shameful realities.

Over the years we make research on difficult subjects such as refugees and religion, drugs and alcohol, prostitution and trafficking and about rape, ending in exhibitions with different target groups. Historical background is used for understanding why people today can act as they do. Ethical dilemmas and solutions of using authentic contemporary stories will be presented. Our ambitions are not to be a place of social healing. We want is to be a place for social reflection, tolerance, understanding of difficult conditions and accept of diversity.

Keywords gender, ethics, uncomfortable, outreach, trafficking, rape

Why talk about gender and difficult issues? – In the Nordic countries, in Germany, yes in all Europe, men and women officially are seen as equal. Even so, we at the Women's Museum in Denmark (Aarhus) feel that talking about gender can still be a provocation. Gender is seen as women's stuff, not a common issue. Men and masculinity are neutral, women and femininity are gendered. Women's Museum in Denmark want to change that sort of gendered blindness.

Often men coming together with a female partner pronounce before buying a ticket to our museum: 'I don't think I am allowed to come in'. They are! We invite men as well as women to visit and use our museum. We invite boys as well as girls.

From the very beginning the Women's Museum got the reputation of telling the untold and showing controversial themes. Through praxis, we learned that it is possible to focus on emotional and political issues, and to do it in ways that move the visitors – for good and for bad. The museum started as a grass root movement in the early 1980s.

Motherhood

A museum should involve its users. We did when we invited young, unmarried mothers in our first project to collect documentation about being a single mother. In the 1980s it was still a problematic social situation not to take care of a man if you bring up a child. The young mothers we hired were unemployed and most of them uneducated. Together with us, middleclass-academically-educated researchers they were equal partners in interviewing women, who have raised children as single mothers in older generations. The young mothers supplied the interviews and the interpretation of the collected oral stories with their special insight knowing. This gave a better documentation and afterwards a better exhibition. The history of motherhood was one of the core subjects in an exhibition in 1984.

How motherhood had developed is an important question – also how fatherhood had developed. The shame for unmarried women to get pregnant and give birth to a child was a burden for women and single mothers – while it was not a shame for a man. His fatherhood was invisible. Norms and traditions on sexuality and marriage have changed. Helped by the pill. Today a growing number of single mothers take care of their babies, and a growing number of fathers want to be emotional parents too. New life-conditions produce new paradoxes!

Immigrants and refugees

Another important question is how is it to be an immigrant or a refugee in Denmark? Women's Museum set up a network for immigrant and refugee-women. They can come here and have a mentor – a Danish or well-integrated volunteer who give advice on how to send an application for a job, where to buy healthy food, how to be a mother for your teenage-children in the Danish society etc. In a one-to-one relation the two meet at the museum, in a library, in their private home – and are invited to special introductions to new exhibitions in the museum or organize other network activities by themselves. Reality is that very, very few persons with foreign ethnical background visit the museum. When special arrangements are made for no-white target groups, it is easier to attract other than people similar to the mainstream.

From inside the mentor network invited women with different cultural backgrounds to enter a community of role models who together and alone

Fig. 1: Women's Museum in Denmark, 2008: visit at the museum where a role model is the host ©Women's Museum in Denmark

could go outside the museum to tell their specific story about their reception in Denmark and about becoming a part of Danish society. One night each week they took turns being the hostess in the exhibition; receiving visitors and telling them about their own life with a childhood in Australia or in Iraq or in Nigeria and an adult life in Denmark. They and guests at the museum got into dialogues about love, marriage and divorce, about headscarves and freedom, about children and successes and defeats (fig. 1, p. 181). Today the mentor network still is active.

Trafficking, drugs and rape

Over the years we have made research and shown exhibitions about drugs and alcohol, about trafficking and about rape. As a women's museum it is important to show the positive as well as the dark side of the globalisation.

We are aware of illicit traffic of cultural objects. Trafficking for prostitution is an even bigger problem. Prostitution and trafficking were subjects of an exhibition shoved in a container – a room for trafficking for the market. Members of the Danish Parliament participated in a debate meeting discussing the criminalization of customers for prostitution.

Making an exhibition about women and alcohol and drugs was taking part in setting an agenda where the museum is co-demanding a political solution for children who grow up in a home marked by addiction, and co-demanding better offers for women who want detox and a clean life. Alcohol is for pleasure – but alcohol and drugs is also a problem in several families. It is much more difficult for children to grow up with an addicted mother, even though it is difficult enough to have an addicted father. Addiction affects the children. Where can they direct their anger? Where can their addicted mothers find help?

Women find it hard to regain the respect of their surroundings after a life of addiction. Is it because of our gendered bias? Our Viking heritage forgive a man and understand that he sometimes wants to go berserk and have fun with the boys. When a man comes out of addiction, he is described as strong-willed. For women there is almost no return. When women come out of addiction, they still are seen as the former – the former drunk, the former junkie.

We Danes are proud of our Viking-culture even though we know, they murdered and raped on their journeys. We showed a copy of an old Viking illustration in our exhibition about rape on a time-line where we presented

myths and historical facts about rapes – telling that our culture in a historical perspective is based on rape. From the middle ages until now interpretation and laws on rape have changed; first to protect the property of a father or a husband, today to protect the victim. With the historical line, we presented rape as a cultural heritage – a cultural heritage we could do without. We called the exhibition *IT IS not YOUR FAULT*. We prepared the exhibition over two years and it was made in close co-operation with counselling organizations and drop-in centres who work with sexual violence daily, as well as with the police. They became part of a working group providing us with contacts to rape victims and knowledge of the complexity of the issue: is rape sometimes just another word for bad sex? How can you be sure when there are no witnesses?

We should not create exhibitions *about* someone, but *with* and *for* someone. During the exhibition process the people it is all about – the former victims – have been involved. They gave their stories to the museum. The focus group helped us specify how to present the paradox of being a victim but having to get on with your life. The objects in the exhibition were the personal stories telling about different rape experience. The Museum had many ethical considerations along the way. The exhibition should not come off as a sob story; it should not invite sexual fright; and it should not dig the gap between the genders deeper by accusing men as rapists.

Using personal stories is a trust issue. We use them to create identification. We want to reach people's feelings – without abusing people's emotions. We want to communicate stories from real life without exposing the persons who gave the museum their present days stories. We solved this problem by making the stories anonymous and gave the persons new names and new voices by letting acting school students from the local theatre tell their stories. Visitors could listen to the stories on headphones or see them told on a screen by silhouetted figures. The tellings in the exhibition were authentic – but they were still anonymous. We selected seven stories – among them a boy. A scout leader assaulted him. For the museum, it was important to tell that also boys can be victims. Being a boy made it extra hard: his masculinity was wounded because rape happens to girls. So, was he a kind of girl? Now he is almost 40 and has been under treatment, but he has still not found any joy of sex.

We did not describe the rape itself because we did not want to present something in which some weird persons may find a pornographic effect and visit the exhibition because of that. The exhibition invited identification and reflection. The target audience for this exhibition was 16- to 20-year-olds.

The main part of all rapes takes place among young people who know each other already. We wanted the exhibition to have a preventative effect by encouraging young people to take responsibility for each other. Encourage girls to set borders and encourage boys to listen and to understand a 'no'. We held workshops for young people. The boys were just as eager as the girls were.

Dialogue

How to react if an exhibition opens visitor's emotional trauma? Exhibitions can trick memories. You never know but exhibitions dealing with difficult issues can reach forgotten memories or hidden anger. A guest in the exhibition can be alone, and we do not know what she or he think. It is important to prepare the staff to take care. They shall not be therapist ore social workers, but you can try to prepare them so they can stand up for difficult meetings with guests.

It is not so 'dangerous' with events and debate meetings. You are present when you discuss difficult issues as domestic violence one night, anorexia another night or more easy topics as female authors and gender philosophy. You are in direct dialogue with the audience. Museums are perfect places where people can meet and discuss. Vulnerable and excluded groups can find their situation presented in an unbiased manner in a historical and contemporary context.

Diversity and different political position can also be taken inside museums. As long as there are fewer women candidates than men, the Women's Museum will organize special meetings before elections to the National Parliament, to the EU Parliament and before local elections. For the Women's Museum, it is important to be active in supporting the democratic process in a world where democracy is not a given. We also have a school programme called *The Historical Way to Democracy*.

Girls and boys

Gendered life start in childhood. You can find some historical background and in a gentle manner give children the opportunity to play with and explore gender differences and similarities. We have developed various learning programmes and a permanent exhibition about the history of girls and

boys – here they can experience changes in childhood and gender roles. In the exhibition, they can climb on staircases, write on the walls and chose identities of children from older generations. The main point in the exhibition for reflection is:

- » Gender and identity are part of our cultural heritage.
- » Gender is a large part of children's psychological identity even though gender discrimination has been abolished.
- » For immigrant children gender plays an explicit role.
- » In a global perspective gender balance can be a problem where the wish for a son is dominant and overproduction of male children a reality.
- » Children can learn to look at gender difference as a resource.

Part of our newest learning programme focus on body and sexuality. We want the young people to accept the diversity: some are slim, some are high, some are small and some are thick. We are born different – and we grow up different.

In a historical frame, we tell how their great grand mothers' generation used corset to be slim lined, and tell about their rebellion and wish to be free. We want young people to tell what body freedom is for them. We show a corset near a poster on anorexia and ask, if the physical corseting has been replaced by a psychical corseting. We want children and young people to be norm critical and encourage them to accept their own body and most of all: show respect to each other.

Gender culture

In 2016 the Women's Museum changed the purpose from focusing explicitly on women's history to developing a museum for gender culture. The roles of women in our society have gone through remarkable transformations. The role of young men have done the same. Gender questions are seen as women's stuff – we want it to be important for all.

In a new exhibition *Gender Blender*, we show gendered items from everyday life. We invited people to come and donate gendered objects to the museum together with their explanation on why and how they use them or interpret them as gendered. Regularly we will have donating meetings of that sort – and display the new objects in our exhibition. The exhibition also

discusses gender and identity. You can find many sorts of gendered orientation today and it is not any longer a question of being woman or man, heterosexual or homosexual orientated. More than a dozen various categories for sexual orientations are identified of people belonging to one (or more) of them.

Oral histories are used in the exhibition. One of them, a Muslim guy, gave us his history but want to be anonymous. Some months after opening the exhibition our curator got a letter:

> Through my work with the Women's Museum I have been allowed to treat the subject 'gender' and contribute with the minority-ethnic-LGBTQ+ perspective based on my own experiences as a homosexual Muslim. As a minority ethnic LGBTQ+ person it is double stigmatized. Homophobia, racism and social control are ongoing among our target groups in Saabah.[1] Women's Museum gave me a platform to discuss prejudices about sexuality, gender identity and ethnicity with themes such as rights, religion, norms and discrimination. The work I have done with the museum has been a springboard – because to tell my story helped me. My contribution was completely anonymous. I experienced great professionalism and a deep insight and understanding of the vulnerability that you can have as a homosexual ethnic minority. Today my parents know – they did not before. The Women's Museum showed interest and recognition of the work Sabaah – Aarhus has made to ensure and emphasize minority ethnic LGBTQ+ persons rights as some of the first in Aarhus.

Our Museum wants to tell the untold, we want to work with minorities, and we want to reach people as activist and engaged citizens. In March 2017 we planned a gender festival – with demonstration as in the 1970s on 8 March, a men-only party at the 9 March and a cross-gender evening at 10 March. It was a success. Especially on 8 March. Around 1,500 women and men walked from the museum to the city hall and back through the city in a Pussy-demonstration (fig. 2, p. 187). After the election of Trump in America, the new women's movement over there came to Aarhus.

1 Sabaah is a voluntary association working to improve the conditions of LGBT+ people with minority ethnic backgrounds.

Fig. 2: Street demonstration on 8 March 2017 ©Women's Museum in Denmark

Guidelines

I have not told about war trauma or political suppression. My examples are all about how to encourage people to be more self-confident and feel more safe to take responsibility for other people and for the society they live in. Praxis around difficult issues in museums can be a challenge for all. As museums, we cannot find the right methods just out of our good hearts or with a lot of emotions. From our experiences around difficult issues in Women's Museum we found that you need to have different praxis when you talk about:

- » collection, where you meet people maybe for the first time,
- » exhibition, where you interpret and let guests alone in the exhibition with their interpretations and feelings,
- » school programmes, where you and a teacher are present,
- » debate meeting and event, where you can facilitate and take part in a dialogue.

We have to improve our skills in handling personal stories and now living people's reactions. We shall discuss what to do and how. Let us use this ICOM Conference *Difficult Issues* to learn from each other, support each other and be stronger together. The first step could be to develop a sort of guidelines for handling difficult issues. Some of the guidelines could be:

» Have time to go back to an interview person who have told you something she maybe never had told to anybody before
» Train your staff in listening to people in your audience
» Be prepared in communication with guests who are affected: offer them a cup of coffee or a silent corner in the Museum where they can sit
» Give your staff a list of telephone numbers for professional assistance and therapist
» Invite diversity
» Ask colleagues how they do

Museums can deal with difficult issues. We already do. Together we can be even better. Let us combine our most fruitful approaches - and continuously make our museums better at collecting, showcasing and inviting diverse stories and different communities in order to contribute to the societal dialogue on difficult issues.

Lulu Anne Hansen

Witch hunts, immigration and integration. New ‘difficult’ museums in the making

Abstract This paper discusses the development of two new museums in the Danish town of Ribe, both of which are aimed at an international audience and both of which can be said to contain elements of dark history. This makes it relevant to frame them within the context of dark tourism both in interpretational and marketing contexts. However, empirical evidence makes such framing difficult alluding to the discrepancies between professional and popular perceptions of the issues at stake – the European witch trials and immigration to America in the late 19th century. Hence this paper advocates a systematic and knowledge based approach to knowing about the audience through understanding popular uses of history relating to the topics at hand and by using this actively in engaging with potential visitors. From this perspective, dark tourism in a museum context can be seen as a cultural construct opposing any rigid framing.

Keywords witch hunt, immigration, dark tourism, Jacob A. Riis

Introduction

In 2013 the Museum of Southwest Jutland (SJM) embarked on an ambitious venture to restore Quedens Gaard, an historic building in the centre of Ribe, Denmark's oldest town. The plans entailed the idea of establishing two new museums in the block, parts of which date back to the 16th century. One museum deals with the history of the European witch trials in renaissance Europe while the other deals with Denmark's most famous emigrant to America, Jacob August Riis, whose haunting pictures of New York's poor immigrant society have claimed an iconic status in American culture. The theme therefore engages with the story of European immigration and integration in America at the end of the 19th century as well as national belonging and identity.

However, throughout the process of developing the content and vision for the museums as well as the fundraising and marketing aspects a series of issues and dilemmas have had to be considered. The paper will, from a supplier perspective, discuss two such key issues. First, both museums arguably hold a dark history that is echoed in contemporary issues such as persecution and immigration. Hence as attractions, they can be placed within the field of dark tourism and marketed as such. However, in recognizing that dark tourism attractions should also be understood as culturally constructed narratives where dark aspects are culturally defined and emphasized, it becomes relevant to reflect on the interpretative strategies chosen at each particular site. For this reason, secondly, the paper will address the importance of not only addressing difficult issues from a professional research perspective such as history but to also include systematic analysis that engages with popular uses of history in order to engage visitors in a more reflexive manner.

Below we will first introduce in more detail the background and process for the realization of each museum. Secondly we will draw together and discuss the two key issues addressed and allude to some general matters that can be systematically approached in dealing with difficult issues in an interpretational setting involving both historical research, interpretation and marketing of the sites.

A frame of darkness

In dealing with and marketing museums dealing with difficult issues the concept of dark tourism can be hard to ignore. Ethically right or wrong there is no doubting the fascination that drives a "tourism that involves travelling to places

associated with death and suffering". In creating new museums, professionals are constantly facing the challenge of balancing professional obligations to support education and learning while at the same time generate a sustainable economy by drawing in paying visitors to their exhibitions. Dark tourism as a phenomenon and concept becomes an interesting frame for issues that can potentially help meet both demands. However, the implications from a museums management perspective are still only being unfolded and especially comparative studies are needed to gain a greater understanding (Lennon and Teare 2017).

Below I will discuss the issue of darkness in relation to the two themed museums mentioned above. First, however, a few words must be said on the theoretical concept of dark tourism. The issue has been approached from both a supply and demand perspective, with for instance Stone and Sharpely (2008) focusing on the motivational factors driving visitors towards death and the macabre. Others have focused more on the supply side perspective and ways of defining and understanding shades or degrees of darkness to be found at different sites (Lennon and Foley 2000). However, more recently it has also been theorised how dark tourism can be understood as culturally defined and hence defined by the cultural interpretations that they represent (Farmaki and Antonoui 2017). In recognition of this, the present paper wishes to take the discussion one step further in relation to themed exhibitions and museums. The purpose is to discuss how such cultural interpretations can be co-created by systematic and knowledge driven engagement with both supply and demand sides of an attraction.

When it comes to difficult issues or as termed by others dissonant heritage, negative heritage etc. (Buchholtz 2005; Digance 2003; Timothy and Boyd 2006; Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996) it has been an issue how to justly represent the different and often conflictual interpretations of a site in meeting the public. Often such issues are related to war, conflict or ethnic or religious strife. But others have more subtle meanings. Below I will try to demonstrate how popular uses of history in general should also be addressed by professionals grappling with the framing of themes and interpretations and how this might be a way of strengthening a more co-creative approach to interpretation. The cases of the two new museums in Ribe Denmark will act as examples.

The Jacob A. Riis Museum – a history of hope or despair

Part of the Quedens Gaard block was the childhood home of Jacob A. Riis. Although, the name might not ring a familiar bell with everybody, the images

of poor American emigrants will have been encountered by many, just as the title of Jacob A. Riis' ground breaking book *How the Other Half Lives* is basic historical knowledge among American schoolchildren (Yochelson and Czitrom 2007)

The history of Jacob A. Riis makes for a fascination history. Growing up in the town of Ribe with an unloving father and as sole surviving child, Riis also had to give up on marrying his great love Elisabeth who chose to accept a proposal from somebody else. Searching for, but never receiving, the approval of his father Riis embarked for America at the end of the 19th century.

Arriving in America, he went on to become a newspaper journalist covering crime stories for several newspapers. His work drew his attention to life amongst the poor immigrants in the New York slum and the aim to help improve living conditions in these areas became one of his focuses. In doing so, he not only tested new technologies of photography in the New York tenement houses but he also created a strong social network for himself becoming a close friend of president Theodore Roosevelt and creating a legacy for himself that is still very much alive even until today.

The childhood home of Jacob A. Riis is situated in the historic building Quedens Gaard in Ribe. The idea of creating a museum dedicated to his history and legacy has been around for the last decade, but it is only within the last five years that the plans have begun to materialize. In creating a new grand plan for the Quedens Gaard block, the museum created a vision for Sortebrødgregade 3 to become the Jacob A. Riis Museum. In doing so, the museum set out to create the narrative that was to set the stage in the museum and to communicate the history that we wanted to pass on to the visitors. It became a museum driven by a note in Riis' diary in which he quotes a poem containing the words "never give up". In short the museums was to focus on the biography of Riis as a Danish immigrant leaving his life and love in the town of Ribe to works his way up from being a poor immigrant to living the American dream and to draw attention to others not so lucky. Although not uncritical about some of his political stances and reasons for action, the basic story of the museum was one where hope ultimately triumphed despair.

The choice of this focus could, of course, be considered to rest on the amazing story of Riis himself. However, it also rested on questions of relevance to the audience of today. Here the issues that sprung to mind were contemporary worries about global migration, the international refugee crisis high on the political and media agenda at the time of creating the content

for the museums, as well as quests of ensuring reasonable social conditions for all inhabitants of a nation. Riis' mission and belief in the possibility of improving the conditions for New York's poor immigrants stood out as one of hope and moral mobilization. This again seemed to ring a bell with certain funds who liked the positive message of building a better future for all.

But the museum could also have chosen to focus more on Riis' credentials as a voyeuristic journalist, forcing his way into the immigrant slum and exposing people's most private lives to further his cause. Slum tourism has been defined as belonging within the category of dark tourism (Steinbrink 2012) and the attraction of the images voyeuristic fascination is undeniable. The poverty and miserable condition of the slum inhabitants could potentially be a cue making the history represented in the material relevant to for example tourists, who did not know of Jacob A. Riis before arriving in Ribe. For this reason, from a marketing perspective, the framing of the Riis story might not support the ambition to draw not only locals but also parts of Ribe's many international tourists to the museum.

As it would turn out, though, the logic of neither the Riis museum work group nor the theoretical approach of dark tourism were able to fully comprehend the complexity of the visitors approach to the theme and museum as will be discussed below. First, however, I will shortly introduce the other museum project to become the neighbour to the Jacob A. Riis Museum; the Witch Museum Ribe.

The Witch Museum Ribe – murder or magic

The historic block in Ribe, part of which was, as mentioned above, the childhood home of Jacob A. Riis, also consists of one renaissance building dating back to the time, when the fear of witches was widespread. In this period the region of Southwest Jutland became a 'hotspot' for witch hunts with Ribe to become the home of Denmark's most famous witch. This, combined history of authentic buildings from the period and the noticeable representation of trials for witch craft in the area, made it logical that the museum dedicated part of the building to creating a whole new museum with the intention of interpreting the history of the Danish and European witch trials in the 16th and 17th centuries. It was clear from the beginning, that while the building offered an unique and authentic frame for the museum, it would also be a challenge to physically present the story in what is now a protected building with low sealing, small

rooms and other physical challenges and limitations. For this reason, there was a firm decision to focus on the trials and punishments of witches and only to a limited extent deal with the historical aspects of superstition and magic.

The work group involved in the Ribe Witch Museum began its work focusing on the issue of fear (Kallestrup 2018). It was the intention to build up the key narrative in the museum around the topic of fear and how fear can be perceived to constitute a key factor to understand central dynamics involved in the European witch trials, estimated to have cost approximately 100,000 Europeans – mainly women, their lives. There was no doubt that the museum would be developed as a dark attraction. Hence a lot of effort was put into thinking about how the topic could be presented in a way that would make the seriousness and depth of the theme understandable to a greater public while not frightening the children who could be expected to also visit the museum. Suggestions involved, amongst other things, using more abstract interpretational means, which could not be decoded by children, but would still be understandable for adults.

In short, from a supply side perspective we were dealing with a clearly dark attraction understood as place telling a story of death and suffering. What we expected were visitors who would be in search of a dark and sinister story about the persecution, torture and executions of hundreds of Danes and thousands of Europeans primarily during the renaissance. Again, the perceptions and focus of the work group was somewhat readdressed in tapping in closer to what potential visitors actually expected of a museum dealing with witches and their history.

Blurring the lines

While working on both the Jacob A. Riis Museum and the Ribe Witch Museum we had the opportunity of digging a bit deeper into the subject of visitor's expectations.[1] Below I will focus on one particular group of visitors, Italian tourists, who visit Ribe in large numbers during the month of August. In the month of August 2017, we were lucky to have an Italian native speaker employed to interview tourists on their perceptions and expectations of our two new themed museums. In all 55 tourists were interviewed.

1 The results were reported in an analysis authored by Federica Danes, an Italian master student, who interviewed 55 Italien tourists on the subject.

First, it is important to notice that the Italian tourists were prone to luck at the two museums relationally. Meaning that they seemed to value one against the other. For this reason it was decided to only introduce one museum, the Jacob A. Riis Museum, in the last part of the interview rounds as its theme always seemed to fall short of matching the interest in the witch museum. This meant that 23 of the people interviewed were only presented to the plans for the Jacob A. Riis Museum and as a result, people's interest in the Jacob A. Riis Museum seemed to rise, but they also seemed more interested in elaborating on the interest or reservations about such a museum. These reflections on Riis and the museum will be presented first.

The most surprising result was that many Italian tourists did not catch on to the message of hope, which had become a central narrative for the museum. On the contrary, several Italians expressed their reservations about a museum dealing with a topic, which, for them, was very urgent and present – the issue of immigration. At the time, Italy had been a central destination for illegal immigrants from North Africa leaving many Italians feeling challenged by the inflow. Some tourists perceived the topic as being too close to home with the massive media coverage and the negative atmosphere surrounding the issue at home.

However, as the interviewer tried to emphasize more the thought of Italian history being part of the Jacob A. Riis heritage, people seemed to become more positive. This would fit well with previous research that demonstrates how Italians are particularly proud of their heritage around the world as they have travelled and settled during the Italian Diasporas (Dixon et al. 2018). From this perspective, they seemed to connect the issue to their own heritage and hence saw the museum in a more positive and interesting light.

The issue was somewhat different for the Witch Museum Ribe. Here, there seemed to be an instant interest in the topic of the witches as most Italian tourists preferred this museum to the Jacob A. Riis Museum as mentioned above. However, while this in itself might seem less surprising it actually constitutes a stark contrast to the work groups' reflections on focus and theme. There was a clear tendency for the tourists to express their expectations to the witch museum in lighter terms. Although agreeing that the theme constitutes a somewhat dark topic, most families with children also perceived it to be the better entertainment for a day out with the children – with some even calling it fun. This is, of course, also an expression of certain commercial tendencies (Cush 2007) surrounding the phenomenon of witches, but it makes the issues no less relevant.

In understanding the logic of these visitors, it is probably necessary to recognize the changes in popular understandings that the figure of the witch has undergone within the last decades transforming in several contexts into a somewhat empowered figure in a universe of magic and adventure. The whole aspect of light entertainment seemed to be present in several tourists' minds as the spoke about the topic. For instance, one group of tourists referred to a particular museum in Holland where they had experienced the practice of weighing a woman to see if she was a witch. The woman of the family had afterwards received a diploma; which certified that she was indeed a witch. Other tourists referred to other witch museums they had visited recalling their 'nice' memories.

In summary, the ideas, associations and expectations of the audience seemed to somewhat differ from what the professionals involved in defining the focus and main narratives of the two museums had expected. In fact, when it comes to both museums, many potential visitors asked in the interviews seemed to some extent to interpret what was at stake at each museum opposite to what was intended by the professionals. Whereas the Jacob A. Riis Museum was meant to represent a positive story of engagement and hope, the Witch Museum was meant to tell the dark story of fear and persecution. So how are we as professionals to deal with such discrepancies?

We could of course, choose to ignore them and try to engage the audience on our terms. Often this would probably work ok given the right cues and technics. Certainly, the issue of engaging visitors with passion and emotion is nothing new (Uzzell and Ballantyne 1998), but it also bears the risk of alienating the visitors if the experience is too far from what they expect. Instead, we have chosen to engage with the potential visitors and their motivations and meaning making as far as possible within the process frame at our disposal. For this reason, we are first looking into whether the views expressed by the Italian tourists are actually similar to other potential tourists. Gaining further knowledge of this seems an important factor in addressing the issue further.

Nevertheless, the results have also inspired some initial grips, which will, when it comes to the Jacob A. Riis Museum, probably be more integrated in the marketing perspective. Here, we will most likely attempt to emphasize the importance of Italian heritage rather than the actuality of the topic of immigration in general. When it comes to the Ribe Witch Museum, however, we have chosen to engage with the discrepancies more directly in the exhibitions, dedicating part of the exhibitions to contemporary witch mythology

and in this way attempting to connect contemporary perceptions of the witch with the history behind. We do not see this as forgetting our professional task of educating visitors of what lies behind the contemporary imagery. Such dilemmas are not new but by using a more systematic and knowledge driven approach to gaining an understanding of potential visitors' perceptions of relevance, it also becomes more legit to deal with issues more or less politicised and contested, because themes and angles have grown out of a mutual understanding.

Conclusion

Whilst the above mentioned considerations are probably often implicitly present in much work to create and interpret historical narratives whether it be in museums, individual exhibitions etc. this paper has tried to address two overall aspects explicitly.

First, within the creation and marketing of museums and exhibitions as dark attractions it is important to recognize the professional decisions to theme them as such. This involves reflecting on the level of darkness involved at each site and the meaning of this darkness to potential visitors. In this way, the elements of darkness must be recognized as culturally defined by both professionals and visitors.

Secondly, it is clear that professional perception of what constitutes relevant and engaging topics can be too rooted in national narratives and logics and are sometimes too shallowly based on what makes the popular and media agenda. While the Jacob A. Riis Museum seemed up to date and relevant based on the Danish political and media agenda of the time, it did not take into consideration one large group of potential visitors perceptions of the topic in relation to their own background and use of history and heritage. Similarly, the expectation to be able to frame the Ribe Witch Museum focusing on fear and persecution, did not smoothly fit with potential visitors ideas of magic, adventure and entertainment.

It seems, therefore, relevant for museum professionals to a greater degree and more specifically to engage – not only with potential visitors but also with the uses of history that surrounds any historical topic, before being too set on specific narratives intending to convey specific meanings. Of course, some topics will be more prone to have a lot of associations and strong feelings attached to them, as for instance witches, but as shown with the Jacob

A. Riis Museum, professional perceptions of darkness are far from a given when it comes to the visitors. The ability to, in an interpretational setting, to tap into and engage with larger and more general topics is not an isolated process but can benefit from knowledge and dialogue. Understanding the meaning making of the visitors sets the stage for a better dialog on narratives, perhaps even a more co-creative approach.

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About the authors

Photo: ICOM Deutschland

Áile Aikio is an indigenous Sámi museum professional. She has been curator in the Sámi Museum Siida in Anár/Inari (Finland) since 2005. Aikio has a master's degree on Ethnology and she is a doctoral candidate in the University of Lapland. The theme for her PhD dissertation is how to sámify museum. She is interested in how cultural heritage institutions could be transformed from sites of colonization to sites for the indigenous peoples.

Terje Anepaio, MA in Ethnology, is a researcher curator at the Estonian National Museum (ENM) since 2001. In the team of ENM's present core exhibition *Encounters* (2016), she mainly treated topics about the everyday life of the Cold War period. She is experienced in the museological exposition of the everyday life of the late Soviet period.

Dr Stefan Bohman, Dr phil in Ethnology and docent in Museology, is the former president of ICOM Sweden and former director of Musikmuseum and Strindbergmuseum in Stockholm, Sweden. He is teacher in Museology at Stockholm and Uppsala University and has written several books in museology.

Diana Chafik has a master's degree in Ethnology. She leads a project about migration at Sörmlands museum and diversity has always been of interest. The last years she has been developing education programmes for museum workers, like accessibility and integration of disability in the collections.

Lulu Anne Hansen (1976), PhD, is Head of History Department, Museum of Southwest Jutland, Ribe (DK). She holds a PhD in history and one of her key research interests revolves around history and heritage interpretation and tourism. She has previously dealt with the Atlantic Wall as contested heritage in Denmark.

Mirkka Hekkurainen, MA, is an ethnologist who is interested in participatory ethnography and dark heritage. In the project *Lapland's Dark Heritage* Mirkka interviewed volunteers and handled the social media from which the chapter stems.

Merete Ipsen is director and co-founder (1983) of the Women's Museum in Aarhus, author around women's history and partner in international projects. She held a number of positions of trust as chair of the Danish Council of Museums (1998–2002), chair of the Danish national committee of ICOM (2003–09), member of ICOM's Executive Council (2010–16) and of the Danish national UNESCO commission (2010–18).

Dr Maria Kobielska is a memory scholar, assistant professor at the Faculty of Polish Studies of the Jagiellonian University, Cracow, member of the Research Center for Memory Cultures. Her most recent book discusses Polish memory culture in the 21st century (*Polska kultura pamięci w XXI wieku: dominanty*, 2016) and she is working on a project that focuses specifically on new Polish historical museums.

Dr Eerika Koskinen-Koivisto is an ethnologist/folklorist and works as a Postdoctoral Researcher at the University of Jyväskylä. In the *Lapland's Dark Heritage* project Eerika interviewed local people about their knowledge on German sites and remains, and observes sites, objects, and landscapes of Lapland.

Dr Karen Logan is the Project Curator of the *Collecting the Troubles and Beyond* project and Curator of the Troubles and Beyond exhibition at the Ulster Museum, Belfast.

Natalie Meurisch is a master student at the Cologne Institute of Conservation Sciences in Cologne, Germany. She gained her BA's degree in Conservation of Easel Paintings, Sculptures and Modern Art at the CICS and worked at the State Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Solveig Hanusardóttir Olsen is cand. mag. in History of Religions and MA in History and Philosophy of Art. She works as a curator at the National Gallery of the Faroe Islands where she arranges exhibitions and takes care of daily operations.

Peter Ostritsch, born in Budapest, studied Social and Cultural Anthropology in Tübingen. He has worked as a curator at the City Museum of Stuttgart and at the Württemberg State Museum. Since 2016 he is Head of Collections at Sörmlands museum, Sweden.

Kathrin Pabst (1971) holds a PhD in professional ethics and works with both its practical and theoretical aspects. As project manager for several exhibits, she has both worked closely with participants from the local community and trained colleagues in doing the same. She is also a member of the Norwegian ICOM board and one of the initiative takers for a new International Committee on Ethical Dilemmas.

Anja Petersen (1971), PhD, is currently working as an educator at Dunkers kulturhus in Helsingborg, Sweden. She is also, together with a colleague at Campus Helsingborg, Lund University, engaged in a three-year research project on norms and the usage of history, focusing master narratives and criticism on local history. Her presentation and article is part of that research project.

Valeria Pica (1974), PhD, is an art historian and museologist, and has been working since 2001 in museums and cultural institutions as educator and educational activities planner. She also works as an adjunct professor for Museum Education at the American University of Rome. From 2016 she is the Italian national correspondent of ICOM Committee for Education and Mediation.

Kristel Rattus, MA in Ethnology, is a researcher curator at the Estonian National Museum (ENM) since 2003. Her background is ethnology and social history. She was the leading curator of the ENM's present core exhibition *Encounters* (2016). Her fields of interest involve patterns of cultural memory and heritage representation; modernisation processes in Estonia during 20th–21st centuries.

Satu Savia is a curator at Helsinki City Museum, Finland. She has a master's degree in Art History from Helsinki University. She has worked as project manager and senior researcher in, for example, the Finnish Heritage Agency and Finnish Museums Association. Her current projects focus on the care and development of picture collections. Savia has published books and articles about the history of photography and museum guidelines.

Hanna Talasmäki is an archivist at Aalto University, Finland. After studying in arts and crafts school, she did her master's degree in Ethnology at the University of Jyväskylä in 2006. She has been working on multiple assignments in museums and archives, in previous times as a project researcher and collection assistant in The Finnish Heritage Agency and as an archivist in Aalto University.

Michael Terwey is Head of Heritage Services and Consultancy at the National Trust for Scotland. Until 2018 he was Head of Collections and Exhibitions at the National Science and Media Museum in Bradford where he was responsible for collections, exhibitions and research programmes.

Dr Suzie Thomas is professor in Cultural Heritage Studies at the University of Helsinki. On the *Lapland's Dark Heritage* project, Suzie is particularly interested in researching the collecting, retrieval and trade of objects and material connected to the German presence in Lapland.

Birgitta Witting is an antiquarian at Kulturmagasinet in Helsingborg and responsible for the Museum's annual contemporary documentation. She is also involved in collecting and making the museum collections accessible through exhibitions, the internet and other channels. She has published numerous articles in the Museum's yearbook *Kring Kärnan* and in the local press. Birgitta Witting is chair of the DOSS steering committee since 2018.

Photo: ICOM Deutschland

Thursday, 21 September 2017

13:00–14:30 **Welcome**
Katherine Hauptman, Chair ICOM Sweden
Beate Reifenscheid, Chair ICOM Germany
Mats Sander, Mayor of Helsingborg, Sweden

Welcoming speech
Suay Aksoy, President ICOM

Introduction to the conference theme
Stefan Bohman, ICOM Sweden

15:15–16:30 **Ethical Challenges for Museum Professionals**
Moderator: Helga Lára Thorsteinsdottir,
Board Member ICOM Iceland

Moral challenges for museum professionals
when working with difficult issues – a short overview
Kathrin Pabst, Head of Department for Research,
Collection Management and Education,
Vest-Agder Museum, Kristiansand, Norway

House of Silicone: Displaying macabre and
contested history at the Saga Museum
Gudrun D Whitehead, Assistant Professor of Museum
Studies, University of Iceland, Reykjavik, Iceland

The German Tank Museum: A blood diamond as
a regional touristic crown jewel?
Ralf Raths, Director, German Tank Museum Munster,
Munster, Germany

17:00–18:15 **Difficult Objects and Sensitive Stories**
Moderator: Eero Ehanti, Chair ICOM Finland

Witch hunts, immigration and integration.
New 'difficult' museums in the making
Lulu Anne Hansen, Head of History Department, Museum of Southwest Jutland, Ribe, Denmark
Flemming Just, Director, Museum of Southwest Jutland, Ribe, Denmark,

Conservational challenges in dealing with Holocaust objects
Natalie Meurisch, Student, Cologne Institute of Conservation Sciences, Cologne, Germany

Documenting collective grief
Birgitta Witting, Antiquarian, Kulturmagasinet, Helsingborg, Sweden

FOLK: An exhibit on science, identity, and politics
Ageliki Lefkaditou, Senior Curator of History of Medicine, Norwegian Museum of Science and Technology/National Medical Museum, Oslo, Norway
Jon Røyne Kyllingstad, Senior Curator, Norwegian Museum of Science and Technology, Oslo, Norway
Henrik Treimo, Senior Curator, Norwegian Museum of Science and Technology, Oslo, Norway

Friday, 22 September 2017

9:00–10:15 **Museums and Changing Communities**
Moderator: Kathrin Pabst, Board Member ICOM Norway

Guovtti ilmmi gaskkas. Balancing between two contested worlds
Áile Aikio, Curator, Sámi Museum Siida, Anár/Inari, Finland

A diffcult issue, or a difficult place? Adapting national museum policies to local museum realities
Maja Leonardsen Musum, Head of Department for Exhibitions and Education, Randsfjordmuseene, Oppland, Norway

The politics of diversity: Excluding identities from the inclusivity movement
Antonio Rodriguez, Consultant, Traveling Exhibitions and International Programs, Strategic Partnerships and Alliances, Washington DC, USA

Trembling walls. When the earthquake changes the identity of local museums
Valeria Pica, National Coordinator for Education and Mediation, Rome, Italy

10:45–12:00 **Contested Histories**
Moderator: Stefan Bohman, ICOM Sweden

Managing the 'other': Stories of the Estonian Russian-speaking minority in the core exhibition of the Estonian National Museum
Terje Anepaio, Researcher Curator, Estonian National Museum, Tartu, Estonia
Kristel Rattus, Researcher Curator, Estonian National Museum, Tartu, Estonia

Warsaw, 2004 – Gdańsk, 2017. Evolution of the Polish museum boom
Maria Kobielska, Jagiellonian University, Research Center for Memory Cultures, Krakow, Poland

Ingeborg Holm changed the world.
An early whistleblower
Anja Petersen, Antiquarian, Kulturmagasinet, Helsingborg, Sweden

13:30–14:45 **Museums and Public Responsibilities**
Moderator: Beate Reifenscheid, Chair ICOM Germany

Collection management and public consent: The practice, politics and perception of collections disposal and transfer
Michael Terwey, Head of Collections and Exhibitions, National Science and Media Museum, Bradford, UK

Hidden objects on display
Karen Sivebæk Munk-Nielsen, Head of Holbæk Museum, Museum Vestsjælland, Holbæk, Denmark

A bloody tradition – whale killing in paintings by Mikines
Solveig Hanusardóttir Olsen, Curator, National Gallery of the Faroe Islands, Torshavn, Faroe Islands

15:15–16:15 **Collecting and Displaying the Hidden Contemporary**
Moderator: Katherine Hauptman, Chair ICOM Sweden

Collecting and telling outside the comfort zone
Diana Chafik, Curator and Project Manager, Sörmlands Museum, Nyköping, Sweden
Peter Ostritsch, Head of Collections, Sörmlands Museum, Nyköping, Sweden

Collecting the Troubles and Beyond: The role of the Ulster Museum in interpreting contested history
Karen Logan, Project Curator, National Museums Northern Ireland, Belfast, Northern Ireland

At home with people with severe mental illness
Ellen Lange, Curator, National Medical Museum/ Norwegian Museum of Science and Technology, Oslo, Norway

16:15–17:00 **Unfolding Dark Narratives**
Moderator: Minna Sarantola-Weiss, Board Member ICOM Finland

Museums and presentation of education, wars and the socialist period as problematic memories – experiences in Slovenia
Branko Šuštar, Museum Councillor, Slovenian School Museum, Ljubljana, Slovenia, and President, Historical Association of Slovenia

Sind wir noch Freunde? Displaying the difficult history of the German presence in Finnish Lapland, 1941–44
Mirkka Hekkurainen, Coordinator, University of Helsinki, Finland
Eerika Koskinen-Koivisto, Postdoctoral Researcher, University of Jyväskylä, Finland
Suzie Thomas, University Lecturer in Museum Studies, University of Helsinki, Finland

17:00–19:00 ICOM Germany Annual Meeting

Saturday, 23 September 2017

9:00–9:45 **Bridging History with the Present**
Moderator: Tine Bagh, Board Member ICOM Denmark

Post-mortem photography – is it right for museums to decide who is remembered, forgotten or hidden?
Satu Savia, Curator, Helsinki City Museum, Helsinki, Finland
Hanna Talasmäki, Freelance Curator, Helsinki, Finland

	Difficult issues around gender *Merete Ipsen,* Director, Women's Museum in Denmark, Aarhus, Denmark
9:45–10:30	**Closing Session** Moderator: Suay Aksoy, President ICOM
10:30–16:30	Field Trip to Elsinore, Denmark Maritime Museum of Denmark (Helsingør), Kronborg Castle

Roll-up Presentations

Congo Gaze – people, encounters and artifacts. Obstacles trust and mistrust
Tone Cecilie Simensen Karlgård, Museum Lecturer, Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo, Norway

An international refugee museum
Anne Sofie Vemmelund Christensen, Curator, Varde Museums, Varde, Denmark

'Kunst auf Lager': from blind spot to spotlight
Carolin Vogel, Project Manager, Hermann Reemtsma Stiftung, Hamburg, Germany

An open forum for reflection about ethics – a new ICOM International Committee on ethical issues?
Kathrin Pabst, Head of Department for Research, Collection Management and Education, Vest-Agder Museum, Norway

Lieferbare Publikationen von ICOM Deutschland

Difficult Issues. Proceedings of the ICOM international conference 2017. Helsingborg, 21–23 September 2017. Hrsg. von ICOM Deutschland. Heidelberg: Arthistoricum 2019. 216 S. Beiträge zur Museologie, Bd. 7. ISBN 978-3-947449-22-4 (PDF) Download: www.arthistoricum.net. doi: https://doi.org/10.11588/arthistoricum.428

Von der Weltausstellung zum Science Lab. Handel – Industrie – Museum. Tagungsband der Jahrestagung von ICOM Deutschland 2016. Hrsg. von ICOM Deutschland. Berlin: ICOM Deutschland 2017. 168 S. Beiträge zur Museologie, Bd. 6. ISBN 978-3-00-056206-8. 15,00 Euro*

Waentig, Friederike; Melanie Dropmann, Karin Konold, Elise Spiegel, Christoph Wenzel: Präventive Konservierung. Ein Leitfaden. Berlin: ICOM Deutschland 2014. 84 S. Beiträge zur Museologie, Bd. 5. ISBN 978-3-00-046939-8 (Gratis)

Zur Ethik des Bewahrens. Tagungsband der Jahrestagung von ICOM Deutschland 2013. Hrsg. von ICOM Deutschland. Berlin: ICOM Deutschland 2014. 148 S. Beiträge zur Museologie, Bd. 4. ISBN 978-3-00-045736-4. 15,00 Euro*

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Ethische Richtlinien für Museen von ICOM. Hrsg. von ICOM Schweiz, ICOM Deutschland und ICOM Österreich. Dt. Fassung. 2., überarb. Aufl. Zürich: ICOM Schweiz 2010. 32 S. ISBN 978-3-9523484-5-1. 4,00 Euro

Wissenschaftskommunikation – Perspektiven der Ausbildung – Lernen im Museum. Hrsg. von ICOM Deutschland, ICOM Frankreich und Deutsches Technikmuseum. Frankfurt am Main u.a.: Peter Lang 2009. 166 S. ISBN 978-3-631-58095-0. 15,00 Euro*

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Bestellung bei:
ICOM Deutschland e.V.
In der Halde 1, 14195 Berlin
Tel. +49 30 69504525
Fax +49 30 69504526
Mail: icom@icom-deutschland.de
www.icom-deutschland.de

Museen sind die Schatzkammern des kulturellen Erbes, Stätten der Erinnerung und der Selbstvergewisserung. Aber wessen Geschichten erzählen sie? Was wird in Museen erinnert, was „vergessen“? – Rund 200 Museumsexperten haben dazu auf der internationalen ICOM-Tagung 2017 unterschiedliche Handlungskonzepte diskutiert. Zwischenbilanz: Um ihre Akzeptanz bei möglichst vielen Bezugsgruppen zu sichern, gehen Museen dazu über, ihr Profil und ihre Rahmenbedingungen offensiv zu kommunizieren. Sie machen unterschiedliche Bevölkerungsgruppen sichtbar, verschaffen ihren Lebensgeschichten Gehör und präsentieren sie als gleichberechtigte Teile des gemeinsamen kulturellen Erbes.

Der Tagungsband vereinigt zahlreiche Beispiele aus europäischen Museen, mit denen die beteiligten Experten den fachlichen Austausch stärken und zu einem gemeinsamen Lernen beitragen möchten.

Museums are the treasure troves of cultural heritage, places of remembrance and self-assurance. But whose stories are they telling? What is remembered in museums, what is ‘forgotten’? – Around 200 museum experts discussed different concepts of action at the international ICOM 2017 conference. Interim results: In order to secure their acceptance by as many reference groups as possible, museums need to communicate their profiles and environments proactively. They make visible different groups of the population, make their life stories heard and present them as equal parts of a shared cultural heritage.

The conference volume brings together numerous examples from European museums, with which the experts involved would like to strengthen the exchange of expertise and contribute to mutual learning.